Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy

BY SUSAN MASINO

My Life and Times with AC/DC, Van Halen, Kiss...

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Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy

Susan Masino

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This book is dedicated to all those who play,
listen to and love rock and roll.
I salute you.

FOREWORD

"Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy" is a center stage front row seat to the late seventies rock explosion seen through the eyes of rock journalist/radio host, Susan Masino.

As associate editor of the Wisconsin music newspaper, The Emerald City Chronicle, Susan interviewed, worked and partied with dozens of bands including Kiss, Van Halen, Cheap Trick, Keith Emerson of Emerson, Lake and Palmer, Leslie West and Ted Nugent.

Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy" also follows AC/DC's rise to international fame from their first American tour in 1977 to the release of their 1980 tribute album to Bon Scott, Back In Black.

Through her three year relationship with AC/DC roadie, Barry Taylor, she received dozens of phone calls and over thirty letters and postcards following their struggles from the inside-forging a bond with the band that still exists today.

"Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy" also features over sixty rock photos including AC/DC, Van Halen, Kiss, Todd Rundgren, David Bowie and Ted Nugent, some never before published.

CONTENTS

Prologue.....5
1-Divine Intervention.....15
2-AC/DC-Let There Be Rock 19
3-Paying Dues.....26
4-Kiss-I Want To Rock 'N' Roll All Night And Party Everyday.....43
5-Move Over Barbara Walters.....54
6-Boys, Boys, Boys.....64
7-Emerson, Lake & Palmer-Trilogy.....75
8-Before Spinal Tap 81
9-Van Halen-Eruption.....87
10-Runnin' With The Devil.....98
11-David Bowie-Fame.....106
12-Leslie West-Scenes From An Imaginary Midwestern.....113
13-Ted Nugent-Hey Baby 118
14-Live Wire.....127
15-Cheap Trick-I Want You To Want Me.....141
16-High Voltage.....150
17-Highway To Hell 160
18-Back In Black.....167
Epilogue 171

-PROLOGUE-

I was born into the music business, at least a part of it. It was 1955, and my parents owned the Riverview Ballroom in Sauk City, Wisconsin. It was the same year that Bill Haley recorded "Rock Around The Clock," Chuck Berry jammed on "Hail, Hail, Rock and Roll," Elvis was becoming King, Little Richard was screamin' "Good Golly Miss Molly," Buddy Holly still had Peggy Sue, and Paul McCartney would soon join John Lennon in his band, The Quarrymen. Rock 'n' roll was also born in 1955. Coincidence? I think not.

My family lived in a small ground floor apartment at the front of the building, with a doorway leading right into the kitchen. My father ran the bar, and my mother took care of the restaurant, which included cooking for all the banquets. They made a good living in those days, and booked some of the greatest recording artists of that era: Louis Armstrong, Lawrence Welk, the Dorsey Brothers, and drummer Gene Krupa all played there. Since the ballroom itself was on Main street with the Wisconsin River running directly behind it, I didn't have much of a yard to play in. So the ballroom became my playground. My earliest memories are of playing up on the stage, and trying to reach the keys of an old upright piano. Any equipment left set up from the night before was always fair game to me.

One night when the incredible Gene Krupa was performing at the ballroom, he found my doll lying by his drum kit. He walked into the kitchen and said to my mother, "I'll bet somebody is looking for this!" She steered him into our apartment, and he gave me my doll and tucked me into bed. I don't remember it, but my mom always got a big kick out of telling that story.

I can remember lying in my crib trying to fall asleep, listening to the music coming through the walls. I grew up loving the drums the most, and I wouldn't be surprised if that had something to do with the fact that the drum beat was what I could always hear the best. Also, being tucked in by the legendary Gene Krupa might have had something to do with it.

My dad likes to describe how I would sit in my stroller in front of the jukebox in the bar, and stay content as long as the music kept playing. God forbid he should run out of quarters! That helps explain my knowledge of the history of music, at least from the mid-fifties on. I listened to a lot of Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, Eddy Arnold, Kitty Wells, and of course, Elvis Presley.

My parents also booked a wide variety of local and regional performers, like the Zahina Sisters, who were from Iowa. Janean and Jeanette played several instruments, wore white cowboy boots, were backed by a big band, and traveled in a huge pink Cadillac, my first experience with true "rock stars." I loved them both, and I will always remember the last night they played the ballroom before they were going to quit touring. I think one of them was getting married. They woke me up when it was just getting light outside, and gave me crayons and a coloring book. Then they drove off into the sunrise, never to be heard from again. My younger sister Lori's middle name ended up being Janean.

So my formative years were spent in a ballroom, watching performers load-in and load-out. Gypsies traveling the world bringing enjoyment to thousands. My penchant for the entertainment business was sealed.

After several years, my parents sold the Riverview Ballroom and bought a hotel up in northern Wisconsin, not far from the Menominee Indian Reservation. There they booked local country bands on the weekends, especially The Blue Ramblers. Which was a three piece band with a husband and wife team. I remember the guitar player could have given Roy Clark a run for his money, and my mother tried for years to get him to go to Nashville to try to break into the business.

This time our home was upstairs from the bar and restaurant; it was a one bedroom apartment with three more hotel rooms connected to it. Every weekend we would go to sleep listening to the bands play downstairs. As I got older (if I could get my younger sister to sleep), I could come downstairs and sit on a stool behind the bar and watch the bands. I remember how mad I was one morning when I woke up and realized that it was I who had fallen asleep first, and my sister got to go downstairs! Tragedy! I missed a night of watching the locals do the two-step around the bar, shaking the building down to its foundation!

One Sunday morning as I was playing outside, I found an upper set of false teeth lying on a bench in front of the hotel. Obviously, someone partied a little too much the night before. The funny thing was no one ever claimed them! I saw a lot of things growing up in the bar business. I got used to staying up late and sleeping in late. It was hell for me to wake up for school in the morning, and I never have gotten used to working the dayshift. I was born for rock 'n' roll hours.

Four years later we sold the hotel and moved to Lodi, Wisconsin,

where my parents bought a restaurant on Main street. Without the bar and hotel business, our lives got a lot calmer. My sisters and I still rocked every weekend, especially when the local teenagers would hang out in the restaurant and dance to the jukebox.

Things suddenly changed for me one Sunday night, while I was hanging out in a bar with my parents (where else, I ask you), when the Ed Sullivan show came on featuring four lads from Liverpool called the Beatles. That night changed our lives forever. I fell instantly in love with the Beatles, at least as much as any seven year old can fall in love, anyway. And from that day on we were consumed by John, Paul, George and Ringo. My sister Kathy was sixteen so she could buy all the 45s, baseball cards and teen magazines that we needed. Our personal transistor radios were always on just in case a Beatles song was played. Before long we each had an entire wall of our bedrooms completely covered with Beatles pictures. I was madly in love with Paul, and was determined to grow up and marry him. I think Linda Eastman was one of the luckiest chicks on the face of the planet, and one of the most talented rock photographers, too.

Now I was certain that rock and roll was going to be my life, I just thought at the time, you had to marry into it. It never occurred to me that I could be a performer. This was the mid-sixties, and girls weren't a big part of the rock 'n' roll revolution-yet. We had the Beatles, the Stones, the Beach Boys and the Dave Clark 5, but no Grace Slick or Janis Joplin. At the time I figured rock 'n' roll was a boy's game. But I still wanted to play.

As I grew older, I remained an avid music lover, always buying the latest albums and seeing all the live rock concerts that came through Madison. I was thirteen years old in 1969, and everyone around me was protesting the Vietnam War. My two closest girlfriends used to go into downtown Madison during the riots and run along the streets with the students getting tear-gassed. They thought it was fun! The music was getting more passionate. We were still listening to the Beatles, but also to the Rolling Stones, Credence Clearwater Revival, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Jefferson Airplane.

It was 1970 when I picked up my first Led Zeppelin album; I bought it at a head shop up in LaCrosse, WI. Now that was a discovery!

During my high school years I saw dozens of live concerts: the James Gang, Deep Purple, Black Sabbath, The Who, Edgar Winter, Fleetwood Mac, Humble Pie, the Allman Brothers and one of my all-time favorite bands, Uriah Heep.

When Pink Floyd's album, *The Dark Side of the Moon* was released (yes, I actually remember when that first came out), we were all totally blown away! They played the Dane County Coliseum in Madison in April of 1973. My friends and I were doing acid and that concert was the first time we had ever seen laser lights. They also had surround-sound which we had never experienced before. Needless to say, on acid, back in the early seventies, this concert was truly amazing. The funniest thing happened when the concert was over. Very strange things can happen in Wisconsin in early April and that

night, during the concert, sixteen inches of snow fell on Madison. When we went into the concert, it wasn't even raining. When we walked outside, it looked just like a winter set for a movie. I was so high that for a couple of seconds, I actually thought Pink Floyd had dumped the snow into the parking lot as their final special effect. Man, the acid was good in those days!

So life, school, an early marriage and motherhood took over my plans to become part of the rock 'n' roll world until my marriage started to fall apart. When that happened, my girlfriend Katy Sticha started to take me along to see her favorite local band, Punch. That's when things really started to change for me.

One night, after one of Punch's gigs, Katy and I were invited to an after-bar party thrown by a friend of the band's. It was in the spring of 1977, and I was nursing my annual case of laryngitis. I was also pretty depressed having realized that my marriage was over and I was facing life alone as a single mother. Something I thought would never happen to me.

So I was sitting at this party, unable to talk to anyone, but still trying to enjoy the fact that I was hanging around a whole new group of people. As I was listening to different conversations, I suddenly realized that many of them were involved in the music business, but they weren't all performers. Right then and there, I secretly promised myself to somehow find a way to become involved in the business, I just didn't know how I was going to do it.

Over the next couple of months as my husband and I went our separate ways, I began dating Punch's soundman, Dick Kitchen. Aside from going to see Punch perform, we also went out to see other groups.

I still hadn't figured out how I was going to work in the music business until the night Dick was bragging about an article a friend of his had written, which appeared in the local music rag called the Madcity Music Sheet. At the time, the Sheet was the only thing published in Madison which wrote exclusively about music.

The author of the article was a woman, and the piece was pretty much a promotional testimony for a band called Streetlife, who were from Dick's hometown of Janesville. When I actually read the article, I couldn't understand what all his raving was about. Was it because the article was about a Janesville band or that it was written by a woman he knew? As I was reading it, I thought to myself that I could write something like that, but who would give me the chance?

Then one night as Katy and I were sitting in a local bar, the Shuffle Inn, watching a band called Two-Way Zoo, something very ironic happened. During one of their sets, the drummer broke a drumhead and while he was fixing it, the two guitar players started bantering back and forth. One of them asked the other if he had a chance to read the Madcity Music Sheet, which had been left for them in the dressing room. The other guitar player laughed and said, "I don't read that kind of shit." Of course, the first thing I thought was, you're lucky no one from that paper is here reviewing you.

And that's when the proverbial light bulb went on above my head. I quickly found a pen and a scrap of paper, and made some notes, not saying anything about it to Katy.

Later that night I went home and wrote an anonymous letter to Gary Sohmers, the editor of the Sheet, which went like this:

"Last Sunday night I caught a new band in town down at the Shuffle. They are known as Two-Way Zoo. Now, I'm always open to giving all new bands a fair chance to impress me, so there I was trying to be impressed. During the second set, the drummer broke a drum head so we were subjected to their non-musical charms. While the boys were kidding around, one guitar player asked another if he had taken a look at the Madcity Music Sheet left for them in their dressing room. He immediately replied that he doesn't read 'that kind of shit.'

Well, that's when I decided someone should review this band. Until then I was giving them the benefit of the doubt. Don't misunderstand, there is definitely talent there. There was some fine guitar playing, nice harmonies,and their cover of the Doobie Bros. actually seemed hot. I understand they're a new band and being on the road for awhile will tighten things up. But most of Sunday night what I heard was a choice of music dated to at least two years ago by the Doobie Bros., Uriah Heep and Bad Company. I couldn't hear their bass or drums over the rest of the guitars; there were four guys up front all trying to be the 'star', and generally, the whole sound of the show had too much high end-to the point of

pain at times. But what I'd really like to say boys, is let's not knock the Madcity Music Sheet, lest it sometime, somewhere, decides to review you!" (Sorry, sarcasm is a sport in my family.)

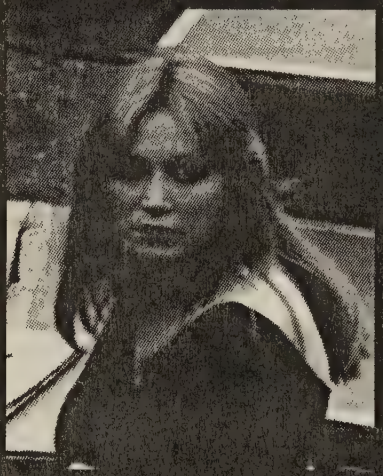
I signed the letter J.M., my two middle initials, and mailed it in without telling another soul. I waited impatiently for their next issue to come out. Katy worked for the distribution company which handled the Sheet, so I went right over there as soon as the newspaper bundles were dropped off. I'll never forget flipping through the pages of that issue looking for my letter to the editor. Towards the back of the paper, there it was in all it's glory! I was so excited I couldn't contain myself. That's when I told Katy and my new friends in Punch that I had written it. I guess the sarcastic tone of the letter amused almost everyone who read it, except of course, for Two-Way Zoo and their manager, Dean Swett. Apparently he was on the phone to the paper immediately and had a hard time believing that the editors didn't know who actually wrote the letter. Mr. Swett ended up writing a rebuttal to the paper, and according to the editors, my letter generated more controversy than anything they had ever printed.

When the guitar player from Punch, John Masino, who later became my second husband, said to me, "You should write for this paper!" I realized I had found my way into the music business. Now if I could just convince the editors of the Madcity Music Sheet.

Where's the jukebox?

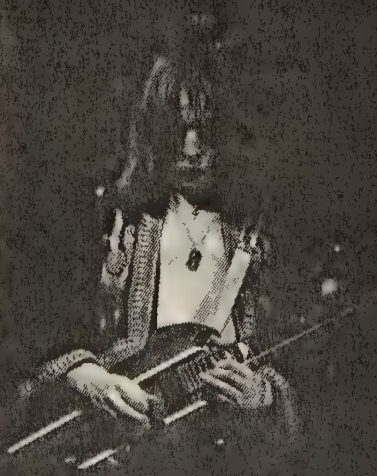
Riverview Ballroom Sauk City, Wisconsin

My first outdoor concert as an official "rock journalist."



John Masino of Punch
Warner Park Madison, WI
July, 1977

Luther Allison
Shuffle Inn, Madison, WI
July 1977



Rick Derringer at El Tejon,
Madison, WI August 1977

Photos by Keith Wessel

Chapter 1

Divine Intervention

I came up with an idea when I heard that Punch was booked to open for Rick Derringer in Madison in August of 1977. Rick was scheduled to appear in Milwaukee first. Then about a week later, he was coming to Madison to play at a downtown club called El Tejon. I was working at one of my many temporary clerical jobs. Up until that summer, I had been a stay-at-home mom. As I was doing some book keeping for trucking company, I kept thinking about the upcoming Rick Derringer shows.

I finally figured out with the Sheet's permission, that I could go to Milwaukee and review Rick's concert, plus add a plug for the upcoming show with Punch at the end of my article. Amazingly enough, this to me at the time was a major publicity brainstorm!

It took me a few days to work up the courage, but then I finally called the Sheet and asked to speak to the editor. As I was telling him that I was the person who wrote the nasty letter about Two-Way Zoo, he quickly had the associate editor, Michael St. John, pick up the extension. I know they were both shocked by the fact that it was a woman who wrote it. When I asked them if I could use their credentials to review Rick Derringer in Milwaukee that weekend, they were all for it. I only had a couple of days to turn the piece around, and they promised, if it was acceptable, they would print it.

The following Friday night Katy, our friend Chad, and I drove to the Electric Ballroom in Milwaukee to see Rick Derrringer. I spent the whole ride trying to psych myself up for talking my way through the door so I could review the event.

By the time we got to the venue, I was ready to play the part. Not only did I talk my way in, but I got my friends in for free as well. I took notes during the show, and I remember the successful Madison band Clicker, opened up.

After Rick's last encore, I decided if I was there to review the show, and had successfully used the Madcity Music Sheet's credentials, why not get backstage and see if I could ask Rick a few questions for my article? I did end up asking him about the tour and his new album, so I was very proud of myself for managing to pull it off. You might say a monster was born!

I handed in my article on time and breathlessly waited to see the next issue come out. When I did get my hands on a paper, my review was in there, but my byline was mysteriously missing. I immediately called Gary and Michael and made an appointment to meet with them.

Their office was down on Atwood Avenue in what was once the Martin Glass Company building. There were boxes of albums everywhere, with rock and roll posters covering the walls. They had two desks placed next to each other covered with tent-like awnings made out of Indian print bedspreads. I guess this was Hippy Central.

When I confronted them about the fact that my name wasn't on the article, they verbally attacked me for trying to promote Punch! They claimed that they alone were planning on managing and promoting Punch, and who did I think I was? So much for good intentions. Incidentally, that job eventually went to Ken Adamany, Cheap Trick's manager.

Obviously, they didn't stay mad at me for long, because they asked me to become a staff writer and review shows for them. Of course it was for free, but I had finally been offered a way to gain experience in the music business. My rock journalism career had been launched, although you know what Frank Zappa said about rock journalists: "They are people who can't write, interviewing people who can't talk, for people who can't read." Thank you, Mr. Zappa!

I thought I had made it into the big time. I (finally) got my name into the masthead of the paper as a contributing writer, and I could get in free to almost any show that I wanted to see. This was 1977, and sitting at a table jotting notes into your mini notepad while you watched a band was, to some people, very cool.

Over that summer, I cut my proverbial teeth reviewing local and regional bands who were playing the various clubs in town. At that time, you could see good live music somewhere in Madison every night of the week. We had Headliners, El Tejon, the Stone Hearth, The Pub, The Rathskeller, The Shuffle and the Church Key to hang out in. Cheap Trick appeared here regularly, as did Luther Allison, Ben Sidran and Tim Davis.

One afternoon, while I was driving by the paper, I suddenly decided to pull over and go in to see if I could pick up another assignment. No one was there but Gary, the editor. It was Tuesday, August 16, 1977. The radio was buzzing with the sad news of Elvis's death.

Gary said he didn't have any assignments for me, but that someone from Stardate Productions called and wanted a volunteer to come down to

the Stone Hearth to put together the dressing room and act as a general gofer for the evening. They had booked a band from Australia, and needed some help. The perk was that I could see the show for free, plus invite a guest. I was going to spend the evening alone anyway, so I agreed to go. As I was walking out the door, I asked Gary what the name of the band was and he replied, "AC/DC."

Chapter 2

AC/DC
Let There Be Rock

I got down to the club around four o'clock and was immediately sent out to the liquor store to buy some Blue Nun wine for the singer. The road crew was setting up, but the band hadn't arrived yet.

The Stone Hearth was a large rectangular bar with a loft with seats on one end and a loft made into a dressing room on the other. The stage was in the middle along the back wall across from the front door. It definitely wasn't a fancy place. The large carpeted area smelled like stale beer.

After I got back from the store, I helped set up some deli platters and stocked the large garbage cans full of ice with sodas and beer. Since I had the time, I got a promotional kit from the representative from Stardate, and sat down to read about the band.

Their pictures weren't very flattering and their bio said they had been "causing brawls from one end of Europe to the other." I was suddenly wondering what I had gotten myself into.

As I watched the road crew work on equipment, I overheard one roadie trashing the great U.S. of A. and I couldn't keep my mouth shut. I promptly walked over to him and said if he didn't like the place, the airport was a short drive away! We immediately got into a debate about how soft (in his opinion), we Americans were. That we sent our children to school with calculators and such. Then he introduced himself: his name was Barry Taylor and he had been on the road with the band for a while. This was their first trip to the United States.

We really hit it off and continued to talk on and off all evening. As I noticed the band starting to arrive, I quickly ran upstairs to make sure the cheese slices were lying straight. I didn't want to piss anyone off! Quietly they starting filing into the room as I started backing my way out of it. I told them I could be found downstairs if they needed anything, and to help themselves to the food and drink. Just then a surly looking guy with dark hair and tattoos up and down his arms walked in, walked right up to me and yelled, "Sit!" I immediately sat down on the first available object I could find, which luckily was a chair.

Then he poured two glasses of wine, walked over and handed me one and said, "Hi! I'm Bon Scott, you must be Sue." Right away Malcolm, who was seated on the couch, smiled and said, "The promoter told us about you, he said you'd give us anything we want!" (Which got quite a roar of laughter from everyone in the room.)

I sat and drank my wine and tried to understand their thick Australian/English accents. They were all dressed in jeans and t-shirts, and Angus in particular looked very young (no pun intended!) Their press kit said he was just out of his teens, but most of the band were in their early 20's. Bon had just turned thirty-one.

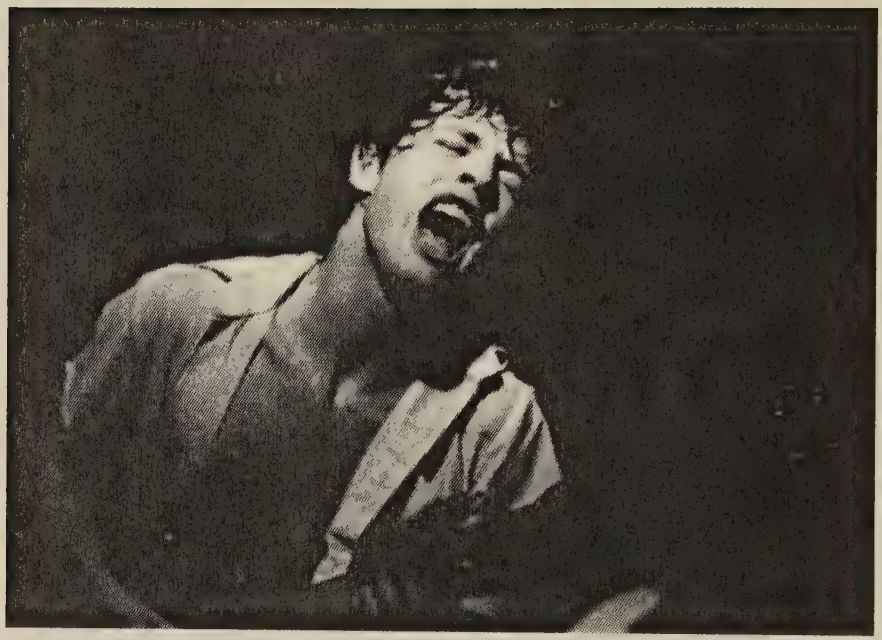
Angus quickly planted himself on the couch and worked on his guitars until it was showtime. There were windows running along the floor of two walls which faced the street outside. Every time any girls walked by, a couple of them would jump up and pound on the windows.

Once I walked downstairs with Cliff to help him order a certain drink , but the bartender couldn't figure out what it was he wanted, so he gave up and went back upstairs. Their press kit had also mentioned what a package of dynamite Angus Young was, and as he sat on the couch quietly working on his guitars, I wondered what they were talking about!

The PA and lighting system was rented from Punch, and a Chicago band called the Hounds opened the show. The cover charge was $3 and I have the poster to prove it! Even though they ran radio ads that afternoon, the turn-out was only about 100 people. They already had three albums released in Australia, but were basically unheard of in the United States.

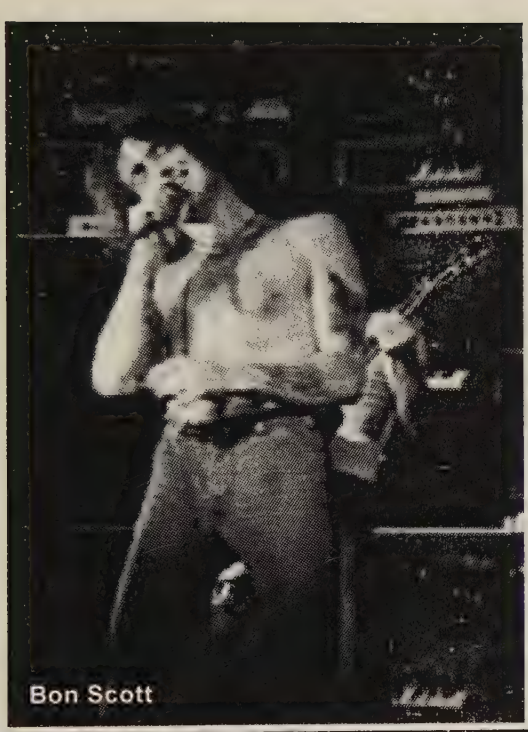
I didn't really know what to expect when they walked on stage that night, but after about two songs I was completely stunned. I loved rock and roll, but I had never heard it played like this before! We had Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Steppenwolf, even Black Sabbath, but AC/DC was a whole other matter.

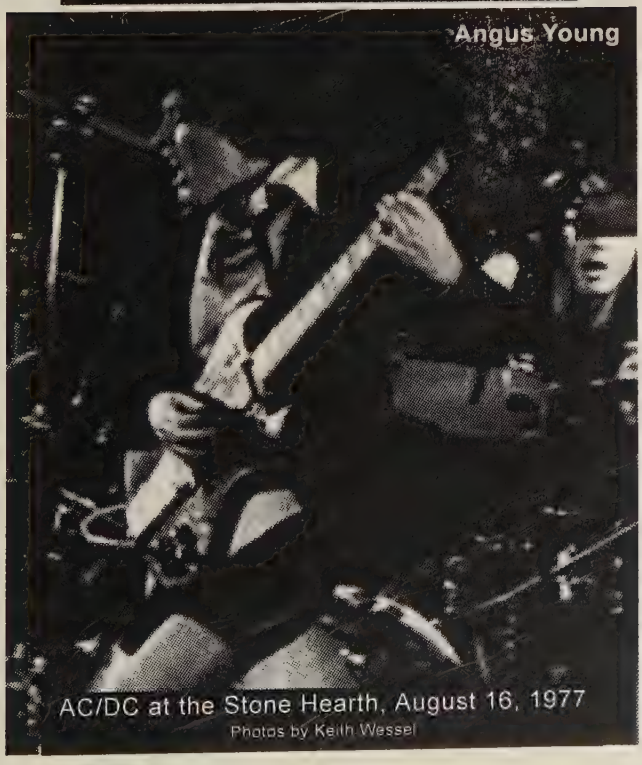
The songs they played were many of the hits they still play today, "Whole Lotta Rosie," "High Voltage," "Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap" and "The Jack." The music was great, but it was the sheer level of energy coming off the stage that was so impressive. Angus ran around like a crazed lunatic, never missing a note. Bon Scott with that devilish grin, was magnetic and amusing at the same time. And rhythm guitarist Malcolm Young, bassist Cliff Williams and drummer Phil Rudd were the most incredible rhythm section I have ever heard. Still are today. I felt the same way I had the night I saw the Beatles for the first time on the Ed Sullivan Show. I knew I was clearly seeing something special.



Photos by Keith Wessel

Angus and Malcolm Young
Stone Hearth, Madison, WI August 16,1977


Bon Scott


Angus Young
AC/DC at the Stone Hearth, August 16, 1977
Photos by Keith Wessel

Photos by Keith Wessel

Bon Scott and Angus Young

Stone Hearth

August 16, 1977

For the encore that night, Bon Scott dedicated their last song to Elvis, "Who should have played some good hard rock." Afterwards, in the dressing room as dozens of people tried to talk to the band, I walked up to Bon and said, "God, Bon! You guys really blew my socks off!" He screwed up his face and said, "Wha?" I had to explain to him that it was American slang for really impressing me, that I was trying to give him a compliment. That he understood. When I told the rest of the band that I thought they would be internationally famous someday, they all laughed at me. I said it wouldn't be right away, but I predicted in two to three years, AC/DC was going to be huge!

My prediction was very accurate when you think about the fact that three years from that night, Bon Scott would be gone, and the album they would be working on in the summer of 1980 was Back In Black, which would become one of the top ten biggest selling rock albums of all time.

I turned down an invitation to go back to their motel to party with them, but as I was leaving, Barry asked me for my address and phone number. As I wrote it down, I remember thinking I would probably never hear from him again. I knew they were off to Michigan, and wondered the next night how they were doing.

About two weeks later, the first postcard from Barry arrived in the mail, endearingly addressed to "The Struggling Reporter."

Chapter 3

Paying Dues

The postcard was from Hollywood, California, where Barry deemed it a strange place where people tried to be a little too cool. He said things were going very well for the band, and was anxious to get home even if it was only for a few days.

Meanwhile, back at the Sheet, things were suddenly starting to change. The editor, who was a true Deadhead, was having his nineteenth nervous breakdown and disappeared with all the ad money before the next issue was done. His disappearance threw everything into chaos, so Michael St. John, and the new ad salesman Corkey Custer, decided they would print the next issue themselves, then leave to start their own paper.

While Michael was busy with all the confusion, I took over calling the writers and photographers making sure they got their materials in by deadline. As they plotted and planned, I had a talk with Corkey expressing my interest in being part of the new paper. He was impressed with how I organized everyone's assignments, and asked me to be the associate editor of The Emerald City Chronicle. I was delighted to accept.

Within one month, we moved into unfinished office space in the same building as the Lysistrata Restaurant, which was at the corner of Gorham and Broom Streets, a few doors down from El Tejon. There were two rooms finished with dry wall and concrete floors, with a large layout area that remained stacked with debris and cinder blocks. We carpeted the two offices and Michael took the

smaller office, while I set up a space with a divider around me in the larger one. Michael's office had a large desk with posters adorning all the walls. I decorated my space with black and white promotional glossies of all my favorite bands. We each had a phone, and this was years before PCs, faxes and the Internet. We were lucky if our typewriters were electric!

Our copy was typeset and Michael and our art director, Ezra Sidran, cut and pasted everything by hand. The paper was bi-weekly, averaged twenty-four pages and had a black and white cover just for the first edition. By the second issue, they switched to a full-color cover and we suddenly were the coolest music rag this side of the Illinois Entertainer.

Soon we had full page ads from all the record companies, along with ads from the major concert promoters and local clubs. Things started to fall into place right from the beginning.

My duties at the Chronicle were to assign articles and photo shoots, set up tickets, interviews and photo passes, and make sure everyone handed their stuff in on time. Constant baby-sitting. Also, I contributed at least one article to almost every issue. There were dozens of live bands coming through the Madison and Milwaukee area, so we never had to worry about things to write about.

By the age of twenty-one, I had worked several jobs including a printing company, clerical work and painting houses. To actually get paid to do a job like this, was simply a dream come true.

Most of the record companies had offices in Chicago, plus a couple of the labels had college students acting as local reps. Patrick from Capitol Records came up from Chicago, a local student named Art represented A & M and Steve

worked for Columbia Records. They would visit regularly armed with boxes of free albums and the occasional line of coke. Especially if they were pushing to get one of their artists covered. Of course the boys got more of the party favors than I did, which was fine by me; I was just happy to be there.

My first assignment for the new Chronicle, was to go to the Electric Ballroom in Milwaukee and review the Dingoes. They were a rock band from Australia, and had a minor hit with their song "Smooth Sailin'." Their performance was very straight forward and energetic. Australia seemed to be spawning some very good rock and roll bands. After their set, I went upstairs to interview their lead singer, Broderick Smith. That is when I met my first full-fledged publicist, Susan Brainin, from A & M Records.

She was traveling with the band for a few weeks, and had coordinated our interview. I was very impressed with the way she handled herself, and how well she got along with the band. She seemed to be having the time of her life. Meeting her made me want to become a publicist for years; when I finally did work at a publicity firm I decided I would rather be a journalist instead. Publicists have to promote their clients whether they like their music or not. That would be hard for me to do. I would rather promote lots of good music, without worrying about working for a select group of them. Much more freedom, much less pay!

The next postcard I received from Barry was from Sweden. AC/DC had gotten a little time off, then launched into another tour of Europe. He liked Scandinavia, but he wrote that the concerts were strange, no support acts and the

band had to be finished by 9 PM! From there they were on their way to Germany. They planned on being back in the States by November. I couldn't wait to see them again!

When the second issue of the Chronicle came out with ex-Madisonian Steve Miller on the cover, it was in color. Steve played at the Coliseum with harmonica player Norton Buffalo and guitarist Leslie West, who sat in with the band. Patrick, the Capitol Records rep threw a big party for the band after the show in the Governor's Suite at the Edgewater Hotel. It was very lavish with plenty of food and drink. For the party in Chicago, Patrick had commissioned an ice sculpture of the cover of Steve's new album Book of Dreams, which cost him $1,000. So Steve, if you're wondering why your publicity budget was so inflated at the time, now you know.

Patrick was also crazy about a new singer they had just signed, he accurately predicted that she would have a very successful career; her name was Kate Bush.

When the first few bundles came off the presses with our color cover, Michael and Corkey came back to the offices with bottles of champagne. I was on my way out the door to run some errands, when they persuaded me to stay for a glass of bubbly. Big mistake. I'm not much of a drinker, especially when it's champagne. Especially in the middle of the afternoon, especially on an empty stomach. I promptly got roaring drunk! I was supposed to review Iggy Pop at the Orpheum Theatre that night, and when I went to get into my car to go home and freshen up, I somehow locked my keys in it. Now that you could call divine intervention.

Katy gave me a ride home and came back to pick me up after I had slept for a couple of hours. The nap didn't help and I found myself at Iggy's concert pretty much out of it. I know Iggy wore an actual horse's tail which was attached to the back of his jeans, and he rolled around on the floor a lot. Needless to say, I couldn't write a review of the show. I vowed never to let my consumption of anything get in the way of my job again. I was determined to prove a woman could do a man's job in the all-male world of rock 'n' roll, and quickly realized that staying sober would have to be mandatory.

I also had to overcome the perception that if I was interviewing musicians, I must be sleeping with them, too. There were few women backstage in those days that weren't "good-time girls." They were the ones in tight spandex wearing lots of makeup. I always had on blue jeans with a casual shirt and a suitcoat. My makeup was undereye concealer, a little blush and mascara. I rarely wore more than that. I was dedicated to never mixing my assignments with partying, and I pretty much kept that vow. Except once.

My first big assignment was to review Robin Trower and Cheap Trick at the Milwaukee Arena. I went with Michael's girlfriend, Melody, and a photographer, Karen Knodt. Not being a very big fan of Robin Trower, Michael prepped me with questions just in case I did get in to meet him.

I was a big fan of Cheap Trick, although a rather new one. Even though they had been playing the bar circuit around Madison for years, I only saw them

for the first time at their last bar gig at the Stone Hearth just as their first self-titled album came out. I believe opening for Robin Trower was one of their first major shows. They came out and just ripped the stage apart. They really tore the place up, and almost stole the show right out from under Trower.

I tried to get some quotes from the band after their set, but of course their manager Ken Adamany wouldn't let me. He said they would be playing back in Madison soon and then maybe we could set something up in advance. I was luckier with Mr. Trower. As I waited around, I asked the tour manager for some song titles and he pointed to a song list taped to one of the monitors. I was so naive, I actually started to tear one off to take home with me. As a handful of journalists waited outside his dressing room to talk to him, I again asked the tour manager if I could get a few minutes with Robin. When he said if I came back to his hotel later for some champagne, he could get me into the dressing room. I quickly agreed. I wasn't worried, I had two other women with me!

I was promptly ushered past all the other journalists and taken right into Robin's dressing room. I sat on a chair right next to him and armed with Michael's questions, knowledgeably interviewed him for about fifteen minutes. He was very kind and soft-spoken, and I felt honored to be able to meet him.

Then we went over to the Marc Plaza Hotel and drank up all the tour manager's champagne. When we went downstairs to the bar for more drinks, the rest of the band and crew were there. We were having a very nice time talking when the manager asked me to go back up to his room, this time alone.

When I flatly refused, the atmosphere changed very quickly. He started to swear and as we got up to leave, he threw his glass across the room, smashing it against the wall behind the bar. That was my first and only run-in with an overly friendly road manager. You could say it was my crash course in "no head, no backstage pass." It was a rude and necessary awakening: I never ran into any problems after that.

When the next issue came out, I took a copy of it to Ken Adamany's office with another request to interview Cheap Trick. A few weeks later, Ken called and offered me an exclusive interview with the band after an official press conference which they were holding the day before Cheap Trick played the Dane County Coliseum for the first time. I think Michael St. John was a little jealous, and insisted I share the interview with him. He helped me out with Robin Trower, so I agreed that we could do it together.

I got a postcard from Luther Allison, he was in Paris and wrote that he didn't remember who I was, but had my name and address! I gave it to him when I reviewed one of his performances at the Shuffle Inn a couple of months earlier. He went on to find great success later in his career, and sadly played his last concert here in Madison before succumbing to cancer in 1997. Luther certainly played some mean blues!

Our next cover was of Todd Rundgren hitchhiking along the road to "Utopia," before appearing at the Coliseum to promote his latest record, Oops Wrong Planet. Tom went out to the radio station while Todd was there, and got him to pose outside hitchhiking on a country road, of course with a Chronicle tucked under

his arm. Very cool photo, but rather cheesy considering his prestigious career as a producer/performer/interactive pioneer.

Later on that month, I was set up to interview Emerson, Lake and Palmer, who had just released Works Volume 1 and 2. I had listened to a lot of ELP in my high school days, and was really excited about meeting them. For some reason I didn't get anything confirmed in advance, so I had to go to the Coliseum early to see if I could arrange anything. Their flight was delayed by fog and they didn't arrive until about an hour before showtime. Once again, I was waiting backstage with the ladies.

When they did arrive, they walked into the back of the Coliseum right in order, Emerson, Lake and Palmer. I couldn't wait to see them live and was very nervous about going back to the paper without an interview. As I was standing around, suddenly this guy walked up to me and with an English accent, asked me if I would like a glass of wine. Well the accent tipped me off, so I quickly accepted and followed him into a dressing room.

The room was filled with flowers and fruit baskets, a tea set with cups and pastries and a portable baby grand piano. The roadie poured me a glass of wine and just as he walked out, Keith Emerson walked in from the shower with no shirt on and a towel wrapped around his neck...whoa. He introduced himself, asked me how I was doing and poured himself a drink. I suddenly realized that he hadn't asked me into his dressing room for an interview! He had picked me out of the "line-up" when he walked in. Being the struggling professional, I immediately told him who I was and why I was there.

He smiled and said he was going to ask me out to dinner after the show. (So much for dinner with Keith Emerson!) After a few minutes of small talk, I excused myself and went out to find a place to watch the show.

Their concert was incredible, they were such extraordinary musicians. During the show, each band member got to strut their stuff and Keith came off as being the wild man. He sat down at a grand piano and gave us a concerto ranging from church music to a 1930's Buster Keaton soundtrack. Then he armed himself with a detachable keyboard that shot a thick stream of smoke into the audience. After running off the stage, he reappeared in a Phantom of the Opera mask and his notorious Hammond organ. He attacked the keys, jumping on them and later playing while lying underneath them. His set-up also included an exploding computer in "Pictures At An Exhibition."

The concert included a long intermission, and just as I was going to get myself a drink, the same roadie came up to me and said, "Mr. Emerson requests your company in his dressing room, and would you please walk this way." Well I walked that way, and again ended up alone with Keith Emerson. He explained he wasn't prepared for an interview that evening, but if I wanted to come to the Edgewater Hotel the next day, we would arrange one. He also asked that I not turn on the tape recorder I had with me. Then he sat and told me about his background and his love for music. Topping it off, he played me the first song he had ever learned on the piano. This had to be better than sex... I think. Afterwards I saw him leave with one of the "girls." Boy, the things I gave up for my career!

The next afternoon I met him at his hotel and we had a very nice interview. He talked about trying to bring an entire orchestra on the road with them, and the making of their new double album. He also laughed when he talked about his keyboards blowing up on him every night on stage.

Our photo editor Tom Giles was there taking pictures, and after my interview we followed them out to the airport to see them off on their private Lear jet. Because Carl Palmer hadn't arrived yet (in his personal limo - they each had one), we were invited on board to have a soda. Greg Lake himself poured me a ginger ale, and Keith asked me to fly up to Green Bay with them. I was having dinner with my daughter that night, and when I declined, he disappeared through a door. Now that I was sharing custody, I wasn't going to cancel spending time with her, not even for a rock star with a personal jet!

Carl eventually showed up and as Tom and I watched them take off, I declared to someday write a book-because no one would believe the things we got to do! I didn't realize it would take me twenty years to write it, but as they say, better late than never.

My interview with Keith ran in the next issue which had a very unknown comedian on the cover by the name of Steve Martin. I was disappointed that Steve got the cover over ELP, but I was still low-woman on the totem pole.

We usually sat down and voted on the cover story, picking out which pictures would run. I remember how much flak Tom once got when he came back from a concert insisting that he had the next cover story. He had just photographed this piano player that appeared at the Stock Pavilion (of all places), who had just released his debut album, *The Stranger.* We were certain he would never

be heard from again, so Tom could not convince us to put Billy Joel on the cover. After all, the Stock Pavilion was mainly reserved for cattle shows! The night before, Billy had played to a sold-out audience at the Performing Arts Center in Milwaukee. Then he came to Madison to play for about 900 people at the Stock Pavilion. He was quoted as saying, "This is the worst fucking gig we have ever played!" And even changed some of his lyrics in the "Piano Man" to "and the microphone smells like a steer..." He didn't come back to Madison until 2003!

When Cheap Trick played their Coliseum date at the end of November 1977, I finally got the cover story. All the papers were invited to the Sheraton Hotel the day before, for an official press conference. Afterwards, Michael and I sat down with the whole band and interviewed them together. By then the band had been molded into their two geeks-two glamour boys gimmick, backed of course by some powerhouse rock. They were all very friendly, with Rick being the most funny and talkative. I already had a crush on Robin, quickly joining thousands of women worldwide!

Their second album, *In Color*, had just come out and they were really starting to take off. Michael brought along some old pictures of the band taken from some of the bar dates they had played in the area.

The pictures showed a pretty scruffy band, Bun E. and Rick each had hair (!), and this was long before Rick started wearing his infamous checkered sweaters. Robin used to sing in a duo with Brian Beebe before he joined Cheap Trick, and some of the pictures from those days showed him sporting stringy hair

and army jackets. Very early grunge. My husband John used to be in a band called Chunky Pie, and one time when they were looking for a singer they went up to Wisconsin Dells to see Robin perform. Because of his less-than-polished appearance, they decided to pass on him!

Cheap Trick is originally from Rockford, Illinois, and their longtime manager Ken Adamany, has always been based in Madison. Before they became famous, it wasn't unusual for one of the band members to be seen out and about watching other local bands. Punch often had a member of Cheap Trick in the audience.

They used to call themselves The Grim Reaper and Sick Man Of Europe, and legend had it that they went on in place of Otis Redding at the Factory the night Otis's plane went down in Lake Monona: which turned out to be a fable. I don't know what it is about Wisconsin, Otis Redding crashed into Lake Monona here in Madison, Stevie Ray Vaughan crashed into a ski hill in East Troy, Wisconsin and Buddy Holly was scheduled to play in Wisconsin when his plane went down in Clear Lake, Iowa. My advice to rock stars is: do not fly into or out of Wisconsin, ever. You should drive in, preferably in an old station wagon.

So we all sat in a circle in a conference room at the Sheraton, recording the band as they answered our questions. I said to Robin that the Coliseum was a long way from Wisconsin Dells, and he replied, "Not really, it's only about 50 miles." The results of our musician's poll had just come in, and Cheap Trick had taken the best rock and roll band, best vocalist, best bassist and best drummer categories. Rick made some pretty hilarious comments about the fact that he

didn't win in the best guitarist category. He really had us rolling. That is what I've always liked most about Cheap Trick, aside from their music of course, is their outrageous, irreverent senses of humor!

The next night they pulled out all the stops and put on a fantastic show at the Coliseum. It was set up as a half-Coliseum, with a curtain drawn through the middle of the room, but the couple of thousand people that were there really got quite a treat. Cheap Trick rocked everyone, showing the crowd what their brand of rock and roll was all about, setting the course for a very long and hardy career.

Rick threw out tons of guitar picks, and I had to laugh when I read their review the next day in the Wisconsin State Journal. Writer, Genie Campbell, wrote that he was throwing out bubble gum! To think she was getting paid for that! After the concert we went to a huge party at the local club, Bunkys. There was a lot of free food and drink with the band mingling around all evening. Notice how I always mention free food? On my salary at the time, free food was a very important subject in my life. Many of my dinners were off deli trays!

I tried my best to flirt with Robin, but his girlfriend Karen was there with him. At least I got some good conversation. It was so exciting to be able to get close to my favorite bands, especially after listening to music all your life. I never dreamed I would ever be able to meet one of my favorite musicians, much less dozens of them. I wasn't getting rich, but this sure beat typing all day wearing polyester and pantyhose! At a party like that, you certainly didn't need to drink much champagne to get that heady feeling.

Having a serious conversation with Robin Zander anytime, anywhere is a heady feeling!

The Christmas season was upon us, and there were all kinds of concerts to pick from. AC/DC was coming back to Milwaukee on the fourth of December to play the Electric Ballroom. Kiss was coming to the Coliseum in Madison on the 3rd and Ted Nugent would also be there on the 18th.

When I heard about Ted's date, I immediately requested the assignment, but Michael, being from Detroit himself, said he had dibs on the Motor City Madman! I gave him such a hard time about it, that he told me if I covered Kiss on the 3rd, (which happened to be the night before I was going to Milwaukee to see AC/DC), that he would take me with him to meet Ted Nugent.

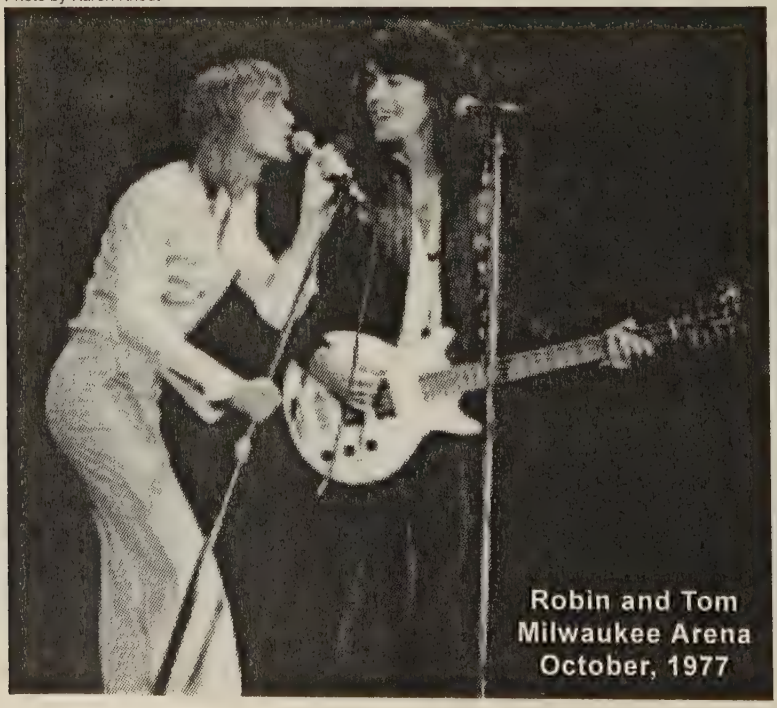
I was definitely not a part of the Kiss Army! I wasn't into their music, and actually considered them to be a glam band because of all the makeup and costumes. Lots of glitz with no substance. But I took Michael up on his offer, not realizing that I was in for one of the wildest weekends of my life.

Is that Bun E. with hair?

Photo by Tom Giles

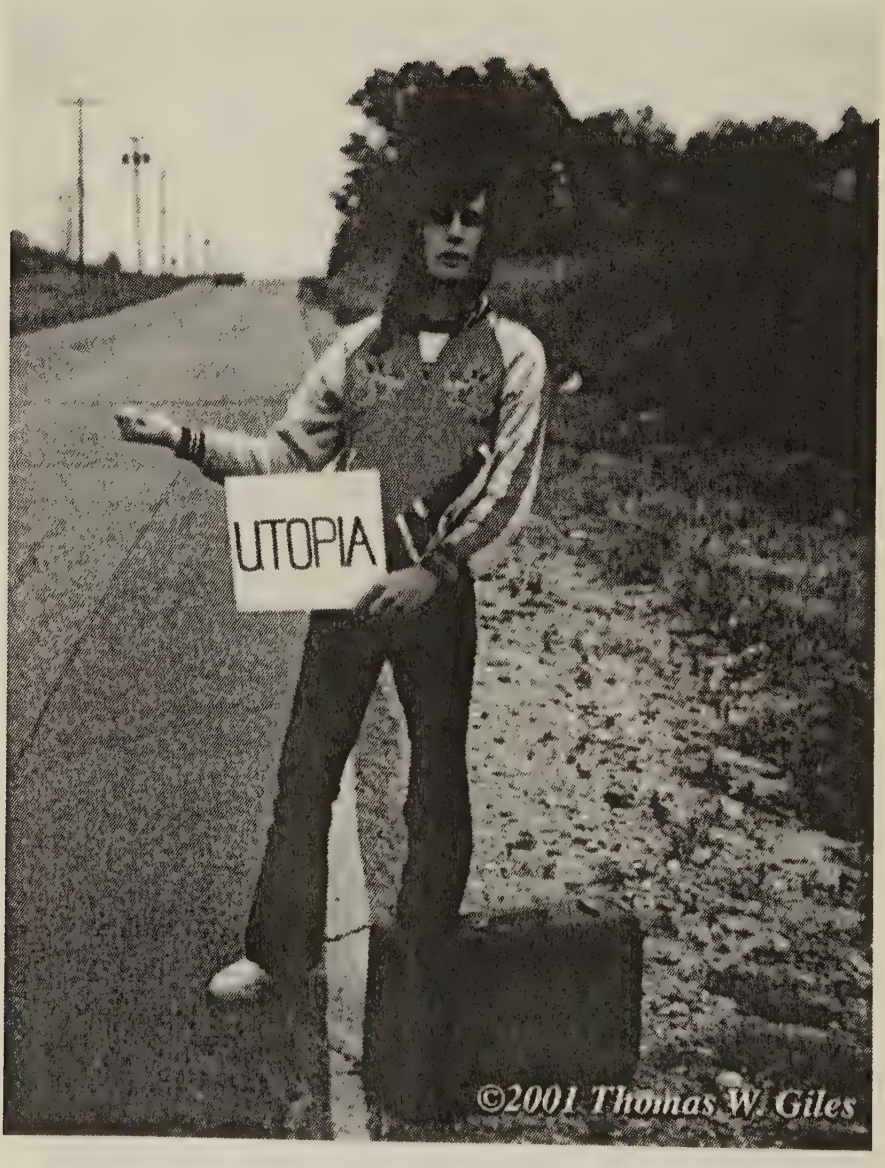
Cheap Trick with Susan and Michael St. John
(background) at the Sheraton Hotel, Madison, WI
November 1977

Photo by Karen Knodt



Photos by Tom Giles

Keith Emerson & Susan
The Edgewater Hotel



Todd Rundgren

Chapter 4

Kiss

I Want To Rock 'n' Roll All Night, And Party Every Day

I wasn't looking forward to going to the Kiss concert that night, I was much more excited about seeing AC/DC in Milwaukee later on in the weekend. So I took my time getting ready, and as my friend Katy and I made our way over to the Coliseum, we stopped by the Sheraton Hotel to check out a party we had heard about that the opening band Detective, was having.

Of course by then the band had left for the show, but there were other personnel hanging around so we stayed for a little while. I was less than enthused about seeing Kiss, and when Detective's bus driver offered us a Valium, I took one from him. I think it was only a five milligram tablet, and I thought that it would relax me so right after the concert I could go home and get some sleep for my trip to Milwaukee the next day. You know how they say the road to Hell is paved with good intentions...

The concert was sold-out and our seats were about half way back in an upper balcony, over to the left of the stage. (That would be stage right for you performers.) This was at the height of their fame in the late seventies, and their stage theatrics were as lavish as they could get.

There were sirens, bombs and confetti, with Peter Criss's drum riser lifting up out of the stage revealing a huge cat with glowing eyes. Gene Simmons spat out blood and did his fire-eating act. Ace Frehley left his guitar to explode into a ball of smoke and feedback; they pulled out all the tricks. I do have to give them credit for being pioneers of the "rock 'n' roll circus."

The chick behind me was into it, she screamed every time Gene stuck out that notorious tongue of his. Watch an old Kiss video and count how many times Gene sticks out his tongue and you'll see what I was up against! I was so irritated by this girl that I almost turned around and yelled at her, but I knew I would immediately be attacked by hundreds of crazed fans around me, so I kept quiet. Besides, it was so loud she never would have heard me anyway!

Their stage show was so intense that when they blew up two big bombs toward the end of the show, my cheeks burned from the flash. I was surprised that they didn't start the place on fire! I had to laugh at Tom Giles being right up at the front of the stage shooting pictures. He was about as much of a Kiss fan as I was, and when they made it rain confetti, it got into his telephoto lens and screwed up his camera. He was just thrilled about that, but he got some incredible pictures!

During the intermission between bands, Tom had mentioned that he had heard about a big party being held for the band afterwards at the Edgewater Hotel. Katy and I were walking through the ground floor of the Coliseum talking about it when two guys with laminated passes walked by us. One of them turned around and asked if we were coming to the party. I said we weren't really invited, and he replied, "You are now." Then he told us to go to the hotel after the show and give his name at the governor's suite, which would get us in. Well we figured it's early, right? And we weren't leaving for Milwaukee until tomorrow afternoon, so why not? Besides, Katy was dying to meet Paul Stanley. I couldn't have cared less.

When we went to the Edgewater Hotel after the show, people were already milling around the lobby looking for the band. As we were waiting for the elevator, Katy was just saying how exciting it would be to actually see Paul Stanley without his makeup on. I thought it would be interesting, since what they looked like without makeup was a very big mystery at that time.

Just then the elevator doors opened, and standing right in front of us was Paul Stanley and another man. As we stared at each other, the gentlemen who was with Paul, whom I later realized was a bodyguard, looked over at him and Paul nodded his head. The bodyguard motioned for us to join them in the elevator. We rode upstairs to the governor's suite in silence with Katy's eyes bugging out of her head! Even though we walked up to the door with Paul Stanley, we still had to clear our names with a gentlemen who had a guest list in front of him. This was the big time, and no party crashers were allowed.

The governor's suite was decked out with more strawberries, champagne and munchies than I had seen in a year. It seemed all the people connected with the Madison music scene were there; it was really a who's who party. As soon as we walked in, we hooked up with their record rep from Casablanca Records. I believe his name was Don, and he told us about another party going on in a suite downstairs. He asked us if we wanted to check it out. Hey, we had gotten this far, so we followed him downstairs.

When we walked into that suite, there were two guys sitting on the couch surrounded by girls. That was it for party activity, so we didn't want too stay long.

As we were walking out to go back upstairs, Don asked us what we had thought of the band. When we explained we had only seen Paul Stanley so far, he started laughing and told us the two guys sitting on the couch were Ace Frehley and Peter Criss. I was floored-they looked so out of it! Don claimed they had just shot up some morphine and wouldn't be joining the party upstairs for a while. Okay... Of course as soon as we got back upstairs, I went right for the food and cocktails.

The table filled with food was also a good vantage point to people watch. We stuffed ourselves and naturally gossiped about the people we were watching. Just as we were wondering if the rest of the band would show up, someone told us that Randy from Stardate Productions was in the other room giving out free t-shirts. I figured after all the concerts I had covered for Stardate, the least they owed me was a free t-shirt, so I went looking for him.

I found Randy in the master bedroom with a bag of t-shirts talking to a handful of people. When I demanded a shirt for myself, he laughed and said, "Oh come on now Severson, you know the old saying, no head no backstage pass, well that goes for t-shirts too!" I quickly told him to fuck off and started to walk out of the room. He threw me a t-shirt and told me to wait a minute. Then he walked up to me, put his arm around my shoulders and asked me if I wanted to meet some of his friends. I said okay, and he walked me into an adjoining bedroom through a doorway that I thought was a closet! Inside there were about a dozen people sitting on and around the bed laughing and talking. They all looked older than me, very dressed up and conservative.

Very deceiving. When Randy walked in behind me, he introduced me to everyone, then as he left, he said he would be right back with the band.

I sat down in a chair and a guy to my right walked over carrying with him a black doctor's bag. He knelt down beside me and asked me what I wanted, "Uppers, downers, coke, poppers, what's your pleasure?" Before I could mutter something, since I was slightly in shock, one of the ladies said, "Let her try a popper, she'll love that!" A what? Before I knew it, he opened a clear plastic box filled with long yellow capsules, which happened to be amyl nitrate. Oh no...

As everyone in the room stared at me, he cracked one open and put it under my nose saying that it would really get me going. After that Valium and a couple of glasses of champagne, I needed a little waking up, so I gave it a try. I thought I inhaled it right, and not much happened. Then someone said he should show me how to really do it. So he instructed me to inhale the fumes and hold my breath for as long as I could. So I tried it again. This time, when I held my breath, I blacked out for a split second. Whoa, this is not what I had in mind. Suddenly I felt like Alice caught on the wrong side of the looking glass. Randy hadn't come back yet and that guy had a whole box of those capsules. I sipped my champagne, smiled at everyone, and stood up, and as I was saying how nice it was to meet everyone, I bolted for the door!

I'll never forget the look on Katy's face when I walked back into the party. She came right over to me and said, "Where the hell have you been?" I told her I would tell her about it later, and then I told her whatever she did, do not go into that room! Then he walked in.

It was Gene Simmons, larger than life. Actually larger than everyone else at the party. With his stack heels, he must have been at least 6 feet 6 inches tall. He was huge! He had on a one piece jumpsuit in dark brown panne velvet, his hair was combed out into an afro, and he was wearing lots of gold chains and assorted adornments around his neck. The best part was his belt buckle: which was a tarantula spider encased in plastic. He looked so friendly!

There had been rumors all night that Gene was looking for a date. Supposedly he had flirted with a married woman, and when her husband objected, they were both thrown out of the party. I had also heard about his infamous road book that featured dozens of his conquests. I had decided I definitely did not want to meet Gene Simmons, no matter what happened.

We went back to our perch by the food, and noticed that Ace and Peter had finally found their way to the party. Gene was tall enough to look over the heads of everyone, and every time he looked over at us, we turned around. I was certain direct eye contact would be fatal! As we stood there, Ace Frehley kept looking over at us. Eventually he started motioning for us to come over to him. He was sitting on a couch with Peter and looked a lot less threatening than Gene. So I walked over to him, planning on getting some quotes for my concert review.

Kiss had a very strict "no interviews" policy at the time, so I figured I could cheat a little by getting some quotes out of them. We sat and talked for quite a while, both Ace and Peter had a lot to say about the band.

Ace was not particularly handsome, he looked like a cross between a Native American and an Eskimo who once has a bad case of acne. But he had a great laugh, and was really very funny to talk to. Since I wasn't a big fan of theirs, I wasn't really nervous talking to him. As a matter of fact I started giving him a hard time about being a big rock star, and he seemed to love that. In his thick New York accent, he kept calling me a "character."

Peter and Ace each had a personal bodyguard who would stand in front of the bathroom door while they used it. It was very dramatic and very pretentious. What did they think we party-goers were going to do, kidnap one of them while they were pissing? When you are sitting around with a bunch of people at a party, it is hard to realize the magnitude of their public lives. I suppose there were people out there that would have thought of kidnapping one of them, but at the time the whole concept of their enormous fame seemed comical to me.

As they were being protected in the bathroom (gee, I wonder what they were really doing in there?) Katy and I decided to take a walk and check out the party downstairs. Once again we were waiting for the elevator when the doors opened up and out walked Gene Simmons. Oh God, I immediately turned around and started walking away. When he saw me, he smiled and started to follow me down the hall trying to introduce himself. I was determined not to get caught alone by Gene, and I was running out of hallway. When I got to the end, he towered over me and I turned around and looked right into his tarantula. Then I looked down and said, "Wow, what cool boots, can I see them?" As he leaned over and pulled up his pant leg, I fled out an exit door

down a stairwell with Katy running after me. I hid in a bathroom for a while and when we came out we ran right into Ace, Peter and their bodyguards. We spent a couple of hours running from one party to the other, all the while trying to ditch the bodyguards. Eventually we all ended up in Ace's room with a couple of other people. By this time, both parties were pretty much over. Gene must have found someone, because we didn't see him again.

Ace had a huge Anvil case sitting in his room filled with his favorite French champagne. When he went to open the top of the case, someone had been using the lid to cut cocaine and as he lifted it the powder slid off the case into the carpeting. One of the guys actually scrambled to the floor and tried to crawl far enough underneath the case to snort it out of the rug. Personally, I didn't want it that badly.

Ace and I had a great time picking on each other, but Peter seemed to be getting more and more morose. One time as I was sitting on the bed talking to Ace, Peter jumped up on the bed and grabbed me around the shoulders and head. I started hitting him with my fists and yelling for the bodyguards to get him off of me. I think he was upset that we were having fun. He had taken no interest in Katy, and I think he was jealous that Ace and I were hitting it off.

Every time we finished a bottle of champagne, I demanded that Ace open another one, after all, he could afford it. I think my obvious lack of hero worship was turning him on. When he pulled an album out of his suitcase and offered it to me, I said, "Why, I won't play it anyway."

That remark sent him into another fit of laughter. It was getting very late, and Ace kept nodding for us to leave the room. I thought to myself, why not? What girl doesn't fantasize about bedding a rich, famous rock star? The funny thing was, I had never fantasized about anyone in Kiss and to this day I'm not sure what possessed me. Maybe it was because I wasn't a big fan of theirs. That way I wouldn't get hurt. I knew it was just for the fun of it, and Ace would forget about me as soon as I left to go home.

I finally got up and followed him out the door. We went next door into another room, fell down on the bed and started making out. All of a sudden there was a loud pounding on the door and his bodyguard started yelling, "Mr. Frehley, Mr. Frehley, are you all right?" With that he burst into the room with this wild look on his face (it must have been all those carpet fibers he had just snorted). Ace screamed at him and told him if he wanted to keep his job he had better leave the room and close the door behind him! As he quickly left us alone, I looked at Ace and said, "That's what you get for hiring minimum wage help." He laughed so hard he almost fell off the bed.

Yes, Virginia, I lived the fantasy. You have to remember that this was the seventies- herpes was a cold sore and Ayds was a diet candy. Local television went off at midnight and there was no MTV. The worst thing you had to worry about was getting VD, and even that could be solved by a penicillan shot. Since I was so adamant about keeping my reputation clean, this incident was totally out of character for me. But I'm glad I did it. I just wish it would have been with someone that I had had the hots for. Even though, to this day I can't watch a Kiss video with Ace in it without smiling just a little.

Gene Simmons

Gene Simmons

Chapter 5

Move Over

Barbara Walters

The morning after the Kiss concert, after about three hours of sleep, I dragged myself out of bed to get ready to go to Milwaukee. I was going to do my first official interview with AC/DC. I know by now that most of the Chronicle staff was sick of hearing me talk about them. I was trying to tell the whole world about AC/DC, because I knew that if you gave them a listen, if you liked rock at all, you would love them. The Milwaukee audience at the Electric Ballroom that night was much larger than the audience at the Stone Hearth in August. Slowly but surely, people were catching on to AC/DC.

I took my girlfriends Katy and Terry Thompson along with me. We were going to rent a hotel room and do some Christmas shopping before coming back to Madison. I knew Barry was going to be at the Ballroom early setting up, so we agreed to meet by late afternoon.

Barry was cuter than I remembered him, and it was great seeing him again. He had a thin build, maybe 5'9", with big brown eyes and caramel colored hair. He had a great smile, not to mention a sexy English accent. And he kept sending me postcards from all over the world. Very seductive. We must have been connected in some past life, because I felt I had known Barry forever.

By the time we got there, the crew was done with setting up the equipment, so we took Barry back to our hotel room with us. Of course he could only hang out for a short time, then we had to get back to the bar. When we walked in someone was grumbling about some electrical problems, and that they weren't sure the bands could even go on! What? AC/DC not going on? Barry took off to find out what was happening.

After much debate, the opening band Detective (the same band that opened for Kiss the night before) got very upset and ended up walking out leaving AC/DC with no opening act. Just think, somewhere right now there are four or five musicians that can say they could have opened for AC/DC back in Milwaukee, but they didn't want to take a chance on the electricity!

Giants that they are, AC/DC adamantly declared that they had come there to play, and that was what they were going to do. They came out and raced through all of their great future hits that they had played at the Stone Hearth. I got a spot up at the front of the stage right in front of Bon, hoping to get the hair blown off of my head. I was not disappointed.

It was fun watching other peoples faces as they got into the band. You cannot see AC/DC live, without falling in love with them. They're a great blues/rock band with an overwhelming ability to slap you in the face with the energy of it. Everyone around me was just discovering this incredible new band, and they were so into the music. It was exhilarating to watch!

In the middle of the show Angus got on Bon's shoulders and ran around the crowd, and it was Barry's job to run with them and keep the guitar cord from getting caught. Angus finally had a new wireless, which made running much easier! By the end of a scorching set, just as predicted, a fire started in a fan above the stage and a small bit of smoke came rolling out of it, so there were no encores. AC/DC had come to play, and they had left the crowd wanting more.

After they retired to the dressing room upstairs, my friends and I joined the whole band for an interview. Bon and Cliff had ladies with them, so they all came in and sat down with us. There was a couch, two chairs and a coffee table.

Bon sat down to the left of me on the couch, so I stuck the tape recorder down between our legs. Phil sat over in the corner, next to him were Cliff and Malcolm. Angus sat on the floor in front of me and leaned on the coffee table. Bon was in fine form; he had been swigging Jack Daniels and cracking jokes all night. The lady who was with him was dressed in black with red fingernails, toenails and lips. I don't know where she was from because I was too scared to ask.

As we all quieted down, I proceeded in actually trying to interview the band. When I explained that I was trying to help the band by writing about them, Angus offered that if I came back to his hotel room with him, he would write home to his mother about me! Bon was also offering his charms and with all of us laughing, I wondered if I was ever going to get a civil answer out of them.

Malcolm knew where he was because Fonzie from the televison show, Happy Days, was from Milwaukee. Ummm... Fonzie was more popular than I had realized. When I asked them about AC/DC merchandise, like t-shirts and buttons, Malcolm and Phil said, "Yes, AC/DC fingernail polish, AC/DC skid marks on your underwear..." This witty banter went on for at least half an hour with Bon doing one of his infamous screams into the tape recorder, then shutting it off for me. While I was attempting to act like Barbara Walters with a bunch of

sweaty, rowdy Australian rockers, Barry had packed up and jumped into the truck bound for the next city. I found out later that Barry didn't say good-bye because he didn't want to interrupt my interview... what interview?

After the serious work was done, Bon started entertaining us by sitting in a chair on his head and farting. He thought this was extremely funny. I gave him credit for imagination. Angus kept following me around asking me to marry him. We had a good laugh and I told him I didn't think Barry would appreciate it. He explained to me that he wanted a blonde wife to come on the road and take care of him. Of course I wasn't taking his proposal seriously, but looking ahead some twenty years and over one hundred *million* albums later, perhaps I should have given it some thought. Talk about missing the boat...or should I say tour bus.

When the cabs came to take the band back to their hotel rooms, we walked out of the front door heading for the parking ramp. Before the cars took off, one stopped and all of a sudden Bon and Angus shoved Malcolm out of the cab and ran up and grabbed Terry and said she was going with them! Mal would ride with Katy and me and show us the way to their hotel. I guess we were being kidnapped!

Malcolm rode in the back seat hanging into the front showing me how to drive. All three of us girls ended up sitting on Malcolm's bed gabbing while Angus chatted up two very tall chicks across the room. After we hung out for a while, we said goodnight and left the Young brothers to their conquests.

A few days later I received a card from Barry postmarked Flint, Michigan. He wanted to apologize for leaving Milwaukee without saying good-bye.

Barry wrote that he thought it would be April before they would be back in the States again. They were getting ready to go back to Australia to record a new album. I was very disappointed that we didn't get a chance to say good-bye. I didn't realize then that our relationship would end up being more cards and letters, than physical time together. Maybe that's why I never fell in love with Barry, because I assumed he would never want to settle down.

When I got back to the office, Michael told me that Gene Simmons had stayed in Madison to do some recording at Full Compass Studios. The band was off for the Christmas season, but Gene had started work on his solo album. Since I didn't get an official interview with Kiss, Michael wanted me to call Gene and see if I could ask him some questions. After the weekend I had just had, I wasn't jumping at the chance to call Gene Simmons! I wanted what had happened to stay quiet, but a few days later Michael handed me his Ace Frehley guitar pick and with a sly grin said, "You might want to have this."

So I picked up the phone and called Gene Simmons at the Edgewater Hotel. Amazingly enough, I got right through to him. I almost fainted when he came on the line. I explained to him who I was, and that we had met briefly at the party last Saturday night. When he realized who I was, he started asking me why I wouldn't stay and talk to him in the hallway. He couldn't accept that I had run away from him. I guess he wasn't used to women running *away* from him. I had definitely left an impression.

Even though there were "no interviews at this time," Gene was gracious enough to answer a couple of questions.

He talked a little about his solo album, and that each band member was doing one. He also told me he planned on designing the cover ala Klaatu, (does anybody remember that band?). No matter how artsy his intentions were, any diehard Kiss fan can tell you that their solo albums had a picture of each of the band on it in full makeup. So much for artistic freedom. When Gene said he was leaving to see a movie, I thanked him for giving me a few moments of his time. We ended our conversation, but it wouldn't be the last time I would hear from him.

AC/DC was scheduled to do five dates with Kiss before they left for Australia. One night Barry called me from a venue in Indianapolis and had to yell over the music in the background. He was laughing about Gene Simmons being freaked out by me. It seems Gene told the whole band about this crazy blonde journalist in Madison, Wisconsin that freaked him out! Barry wanted to know what I had done to him! I don't think he believed me when I told him all I did was run away from him. He said Gene laughed even harder when he found out they already knew me. Yes...it's a small world.

I was very proud of my Kiss article sprinkled with actual quotes from the band, but when I went to transcribe my AC/DC interview, oy vey. I was aware not a lot of people knew about the band, so I wanted to tell everyone where they were from, and that they had better keep an ear out! For background information.

I contacted their management at the time, Michael and Coral Browning in New York City. Coral was kind enough to send me a thick package of press clippings, it turns out AC/DC had already taken the United Kingdom by storm.

The National Rockstar wrote in March 1977, that "Australia's exiled bad boys came out in strictly 4/4 time and hammered out a mean dose of street corner rock and roll from start to finish." Then they went on to describe Angus who "delivered a constant stream of red hot licks in the best guitar hero fashion. He's 17, if he's still playing when he reaches 25, that might be something truly amazing to dig." A headline in Sounds, October 1977 read "Sex, Snot, Sweat and School Kids (or: AC/DC are back in town)." The writer goes on to describe the band: "Phil Rudd on drums straight and loud, new bassman Cliff William's unorthodox strumming a growling underthrum, Malcolm Young emerging as a riffmaker of the most ferocious intensity and Angus continuing to play hard and even imaginative lead while shaking himself about as if he had no further use for his head." Record Mirror, October 1977 wrote: "Crude they may be but there's humour and truth in what they write; they hit you where it counts-between the eyes and the legs. They rock crazily on the raging guitar sound of the Young brothers, riffmaniacs incorporated." And an article in Trouser Press in November 1977 said, "Keep an ear out and your legs crossed."

I got quite a kick out of reading their press clippings and used the inspiration to include in my own article: "(Angus) is no flash in the pan axeman.

This is the boy who has been called a rabid spastic, a caged tiger, a severed worm, cretin-beater, and if that's not enough, is accused of performing with his head wired to the drum kit. Long since famous for dropping his knickers to display a legendary piece of showmanship, he's also been paid to keep his pants up! What the hell more do you want?"

I followed a colorful description of the band with a very short interview, considering that I had to find something decent to print. It took me a while to realize that when they were talking about a bum, they weren't talking about a homeless person, they were talking about my ass! And "wishing they could have a pull" didn't mean taking a drag off a cigarette! What I did end up printing was very funny and very AC/DC, because nothing they ever do is done with a straight face!

Chronicle: How has the reception been for your first American tour?

Phil: It's been good. The last tour through Britain and Europe was a few notches above this.

C: Are there any great differences between your British audiences and your American ones?

Cliff: Yeah, one's British and one's American.

C: Which audience gives you a better reception?

Bon: It's about the same, whoever likes you, likes you, whoever doesn't, doesn't come.

C:That's a revelation, Bon. What are your feelings about touring with Kiss?

Malcolm: Just fine. But they're all big guys! All about 6 foot 2, and were all 5 foot 2!

Bon: They're going to bring in about 5 dozen hacksaws to cut all the mike stands down to our size before we go on.

Angus: Yeah, it should be good!

Phil: We figure we'll reach a lot of people, and that's the important thing.

C: That will definitely be good exposure for you.

Angus: Especially all those young women. And I love young women, 10, 11 years old. (Everybody continues breaking up, which has been the problem from the start.)

C: How many nights will you play with Kiss?

Malcolm: Only about five.

Bon: But at very strategic points, all very big crowds.

C: What are your plans after that?

Bon: We're going back to Australia for about two and a half months. We'll record and do about 4 or 5 dates there. There are a lot of places we haven't hit yet.

C: Are you achieving musically what you set out to do?

Malcolm: No, we started out for Led Zeppelin, and ended up the Monkees!

Bon: Our main intention was to make money.

Angus: My main intention was to pay up to the chick down the road, because she said I was a rotten guitarist when I used to practice at night,

and I said, "Well...fuck you!" She still says I'm rotten!

C: Angus, I noticed you finally have a cordless guitar, how do you like it?

Angus: It's easier, whether it works or not is a little debatable.

Bon: Executions are expensive!

C: Tell me the motive you have for rushing the audience that way.

Angus: To get closer to the women, is it.

Bon: Yeah, we'd kill him if he didn't move so fast.

C: I have observed, Bon, that it looks as if you're chasing him around a lot.

Angus: That's because he is.

C: It looks as if you'd run into each other.

Phil: That's the suspense of it all. TUNE IN NEXT WEEK...WILL THEY CRASH TOGETHER, WILL ANGUS AND BON SURVIVE THE GRUELING TORMENT, OR WILL IT BE A FATAL COLLISION!

C: (I'm starting to give up on getting any more information out of them--one more try...) Did the difficulties tonight change your attitude before you went on stage?

Bon: No! We hated them before we went on!

Malcolm: Yeah! We'd rather play with ourselves any fucking time!

Chapter 6

Boys, Boys, Boys

My AC/DC article caused quite a reaction. Those who had already heard of the band loved it. The uninitiated clamored for AC/DC albums just to see what all the fuss was about. People made comments to me about the article for weeks, and I was very proud of it. I can honestly say I had a little something to do with turning Madison, Wisconsin on to a future rock phenomenon.

At the same time I had also just gotten into Eddie Money, whose debut album I loved the first time I heard it. He was booked to play two nights at Bunky's, and my girlfriend Terry was scheduled to interview Eddie after his first show. Bunky's was a new club that had just opened in the upstairs of a restaurant, with an intimate atmosphere and incredible acoustics. They spared no expense at creating a big city feel. Everyone who played Bunky's always sounded good. They also booked the best talent coming through the area, Eddie Money, Nona Hendrix, The CBS All-Stars, Billy Cobham,The Ramones-lots of fabulous performers.

The first night of Eddie Money's appearance, we got a good old-fashioned Wisconsin blizzard, so they performed for only a handful of people. He had a five piece band, and together they poured out a passionate set. Eddie played "Two Tickets To Paradise" and "Baby Hold On," along with the rest of the first album. He had a unique voice and was also a very good saxophone player. I fell in love with the band, and couldn't wait to meet everyone after the show.

Because of the small turn-out, after their set the band just bellied up to the bar for a drink and visited with the lucky few who made it out that night. Terry sat down with Eddie and did an interview, and I ended up talking to the rhythm guitarist/keyboard player, Chris Solberg. Chris was from San Francisco, and had co-written one of the songs on the album. He and Eddie were good friends. He was also very cute, and when the band invited everyone back to the Sheraton Hotel to party, Terry and I decided to go for it. I can't believe with the blizzard, that we just didn't go home, but when you are from Wisconsin a little snow now and then rarely stops the party!

We went back to the hotel with the band and sat around for another hour. Then Chris excused himself and left the room, and didn't come back right away. Feeling a little miffed, I decided to go home. So what if it was Christmas, and I was feeling sorry for myself? I knew better than to think I was going to find my knight-in-shining armor in some musician that was only in town for two days...didn't I? At least I had convinced myself of that.

The next morning I went into the office, but because of the snow, no one else did! That's so typical, the day after we got that infamous 16 inches during Pink Floyd's concert, I drove all the way to school before realizing that the schools were closed! So there I was sitting in my office by myself, wondering why Chris didn't even say good-bye the night before when the phone rang. It was Chris. He called to apologize for not saying good-bye. He said he didn't intend on being gone for so long, and was really disappointed to find I had left. He also called to see if I wanted to go to a movie with him that

afternoon. Since I was the only one there, I gave myself permission to take the day off! Chris and I went to see the James Bond movie, "Live And Let Die" along with their road manager.

Then I went to see him play their second night at Bunky's. This time the word had gotten around, and the club was standing-room only. They had everyone transfixed, especially with one of my favorite Eddie Money songs, "Save A Little Room For Me." He had an excellent band with great songs and I knew Eddie Money would be around for a while. They took off the next day for Minneapolis, and Chris asked me to come along and spend the weekend with him. I turned him down, but secretly wished I hadn't.

It was getting closer to Christmas, and to "Ted Time," and I know which one the office was more excited about. Michael was a die-hard Nugent fan and couldn't wait until he came to Madison. We were also planning a big party for the staff and all the musicians we knew. The Chronicle was three months old, and things were looking very promising. Live music was thriving and the recession in the eighties wasn't even a possibility back then. Carter was in the White House, and things were still quite innocent and exciting. The American dream had yet to be downsized.

Ted Nugent came to the Coliseum on December eighteenth and Michael took me along with him, as promised. I remember standing towards the back of the place trying to escape the volume. I hadn't started wearing ear plugs yet. Ted had a decorated Christmas tree on one of his stacks and swung from a rope during his performance. The Motor City Madman, in all his glory.

I was really excited about meeting him, but a bit apprehensive too. I didn't know if he would try to shoot me or hog tie me first. I had heard a lot of stories about Ted, and I expected him to be as flamboyant as he was on stage. I was pleasantly mistaken! Ted was over six feet tall, with wavy long hair down to the middle of his back. He had a full mustache and beard ("to keep warm for hunting") and very intense brown eyes. A fox, both in appearance and spirit. I could have fallen for Ted, but he was a little too intimidating for me.

When we first walked into his dressing room, he was very cordial to us and invited us both to sit down with him. I even asked him a few questions myself, and we really seemed to hit it off. Since Michael was a much bigger fan of Ted's than I was, he acted a lot more excited about talking to him. I was pretty relaxed, and surprised to find such an articulate man behind the fiery, furry, flaming-arrow facade. If anyone is a good showman, Ted is certainly one. I really got into talking to him about his family and his other interests in life. He told us about his love for family, rock 'n' roll and the great outdoors. He went on to explain his theory on giving a performance. Whether he had an audience of 5 or 5,000, he said, "I always give it the maximum, it's just that some nights that maximum is beyond. In other words, the gas pedal's always as far down as it can go, it's just that sometimes the road is nice smooth blacktop and you can get a little more speed." Classic Ted.

He clearly was a very intelligent person, and quite opinionated, which suited me just fine since I've been accused of that myself, on occasion. At the end of the interview, Tom Giles came in for the photos. He and Michael had

come up with a great cover idea for Ted. They had him clench a long stemmed red rose between his teeth and growl at the camera. He looked perfect! Tom took a picture of Ted and Michael together, then it was my turn. Ted sat down on the couch and as I walked by him to sit down, he grabbed me by the waist and pulled me down on his lap. As he wrapped his arms around me, he smiled for the camera and said, "This one's for Mom." I smiled just slightly and gave a look that can only come from sitting on Ted Nugent's lap. I too was thrilled for Mom.

The *Chronicle* ended up doing two publicity stunts over the holidays, one being the huge Christmas party we threw upstairs from our offices at an all-ages club called The Club. We played albums and had about a hundred cases of champagne. It was on an off night, so all the musicians could come. It was a great party which included just about every band member in the Madison area. I don't think I have ever seen so many Madison musicians in one place.

We were celebrating being the biggest, coolest music paper around, not to mention the *only* music paper in Wisconsin. The champagne flowed and when some of the guests got into the mistletoe, I decided that I couldn't wait to be caught underneath it with the right person. So I broke off a sprig of it and put it behind my ear. That way I could rightfully kiss anybody I wanted, and could use the excuse of the holiday spirit. What did I tell you about me and champagne? You don't want to know about me and tequila...

The other event that was happening at the time for the paper was that Ezra Sidran, our art director, was redesigning the borders and typeface for the

Ted Nugent

Photo by Tom Giles

"This one's for Mom"
Dane County Coliseum
Madison, WI December 1977

paper, along with Janis Bauer, an artist who was going to paint a new logo using the actual Emerald City from The Wizard of Oz. For the holidays, the Majestic Theatre was showing the movie and WIBA-FM was helping to promote it. Corkey got the idea that on the night of the movies premiere, some of us could dress up like the characters from the Wizard of Oz, and make an appearance to promote the paper. He asked me if I wanted to play Dorothy. I agreed to do it, and never gave it another thought. It was just a date on my calendar.

Corky rented us costumes, and I never even looked at mine until the night of the movie. We were supposed to get dressed and meet everyone back at the office before going over to the theater. Janis was playing the wicked witch, Ralph Sharp (infamous office gofer and spiritual consultant) would be the tin man, Steven Grant (even more infamous writer who is now famous enough not to want to be reminded of this) would play the scarecrow and Ezra (also Ben Sidran's brother) would be the cowardly lion.

We were a good looking crew except that I should have tried on my dress before this. Dorothy had to be about twelve, or so...at least someone without breasts. My dress would not zip up no matter what I did. So I threw a shawl around my shoulders and ran off to the office. It took a couple of people pushing and pulling to get my dress zipped up. I now know what it is like to be bound, which I understand they used to do to young girls in Japan. Those bastards.

While I'm practically losing consciousness, Ezra and Ralph hand me a bag to put in my miniature picnic basket.

They had taken an ounce of homegrown pot and rolled it into dozens of joints to be given away to the audience. I told them that I thought the picnic basket was for Toto, the dog. No, they said, the picnic basket was for giving out free doobies... Personally I doubt Dorothy would have ever done such a thing. So when I went to put on my hideous black frizzy wig, instead I chucked it onto my desk and decided if Dorothy could give out complimentary joints, she could also try life as a blonde!

We took off for the movie, stopping in front of the theater to take promotional pictures. Then after getting a standing ovation from the sold-out audience, I skipped up and down the aisles handing out free reefer. I wonder if the statute of limitations has run out on that one yet? Anyway, when we took our seats I leaned over to Ezra and breathlessly asked him to unzip me before I passed out. Then I sat back and watched the movie half-dressed, but comfortable.

I got a Christmas letter from Barry wishing me a Happy Boxing Day. In England they celebrate the 26th like we do Christmas Day. They used to have boxing matches on that day, and the whole family always enjoys a big feast. He told me about how quiet Buckden Cambs England, his homeland was, and how they didn't have 24 hour T.V., delis or big shopping malls. He thought I might think they were quite backward. Then he went on to tell me about the special Christmas pudding that they make every Christmas night. About ten or twelve of his friends donate some dope and a couple of the girls make a special pud! He said LSD had nothing on this stuff! Just imagine if they had had 24 hour television!

For music he said they had the "Top of the Pops" television show, but no rock radio stations at all! Barry said it was as if real rock didn't exist. They kept up with the latest by going to a good record store in Cambridge about twelve miles away. He suggested I check out Ian Dury and Wreckless Eric. Ian became known for his song "Sex & Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll."

I was hoping to see Barry over the holidays, before they all went to Australia to record the next album. Then I got a letter from him dated January 12th, 1978. Barry and Cliff were going to be detained in England for at least another week because Cliff was having visa problems. He had to have an extension put on it the last time he was in Australia, so they wanted to check his credentials in Melbourne before he could enter the country again.

It ended up that Barry would have to go straight to Australia without having anymore time off to come to the States. He didn't expect to be able to come over until at least April, so he sent me an address to write to him in Sydney, Australia, in care of Albert and Sons, Angus's brother who helped produce their albums. I promptly mailed him a few copies of my article and interview with the band in Milwaukee. I hoped they would appreciate the humor in it.

The Emerald City Chronicle Christmas Party 1977
Back row-J.C. Custer, Michael St. John, Melody Pete, Al Schlicher, Ralph Sharp III, Cathy Miller, Dave Richards (leaning over), Steven Grant, Ezra Sidran, Terry Tompson, Tom Giles, Eric Wuennenberg, Sue Richard, Ross Wuennenberg, Janis Bauer, Katy Sticha and Susan Severson

Photo by Nancy Giles

Photo by Tom Giles

Dorothy never had
so much fun!

Chapter 7

Emerson, Lake & Palmer Trilogy

As soon as I heard Emerson, Lake & Palmer were coming to Chicago, I got a great publicity idea. Actually, I was trying to stave off the winter blues and promote the paper at the same time. The *Chronicle* had held the Musician's Poll back in October, and a lot of the winners were never even notified that they had won! Emerson, Lake & Palmer had won for Best Wisconsin Concert of 1977, so I thought the least I could do is drive to Chicago and give them their award.

When I ran the idea past Corkey, he thought it was great and agreed to foot the bill for my gas. The plan was to go to the Chicago Amphitheatre to see them perform, then give them their award afterward at a party at the White Hall Hotel. Atlantic Records had already arranged everything and were more than happy to include us in their plans.

I rounded up my two partners in crime, Katy and Terry, and we took off for Chicago to see ELP on January 21, 1978. Our local heroes, Punch, were playing at Harlow's in Cicero that same night, so we rented a motel room and decided to make a weekend of it.

Of course I never bothered to get directions, so it took us a while to find the Amphitheatre. Hey, I was twenty-two years old, planning ahead took all the fun out of it! So by the time we got to the concert, the band was already on stage. After driving around the parking lot looking for a spot, I gave up and parked with the limousines next to the back door. I figured if I got into trouble I would just have to ask Keith to get me out of it. Amazingly enough, we never even got a parking ticket!

EMERSON, SEVERSON, LAKE & PALMER

Once backstage, our passes weren't there so I had to talk our way in. Considering that we were three good looking babes, that part wasn't too hard to do. We were then led to an upper balcony right behind the band overlooking the stage. The amphitheatre was packed and the concert was in full swing. We had the most incredible view, I could look down and see the top of Keith's head. This was much better than a front row seat! The band put on a passionate performance, much more intense than the one in Madison the previous November. I think playing to a sold-out audience in a major city would inspire any band to give 1,000 percent! When they played their last song, the response from the audience was deafening.

Afterwards, we immediately took off to find our way to the White Hall Hotel in downtown Chicago. This time I had much better luck. We were to meet a photographer from Green Bay that I had arranged to shoot the concert, then meet us at the hotel for the party. He had sent us pictures of ELP, with a letter begging us to let him cover them when they came to Wisconsin. That job was almost always filled by Tom Giles, who was unable to go to Chicago that weekend. So I called up Robert, and pitched him the idea. He not only jumped at the chance, but almost died from excitement over the phone! When we found our way to the room where the party was being held, we ran

into Robert, who hadn't lost any of his enthusiasm. He had just taken pictures of his favorite band and the thought of meeting them in person was going to be too much! He was so nervous that little beads of sweat kept rolling out of his hair and down the sides of his face. As I tried to assure him that the band was very friendly and not scary at all, we decided to indulge in the free champagne and munchies. This was a very classy hotel, and this party was about as swanky as you could get. The food included quiche, oysters and shrimp the size of doorknobs...I quickly decided that I could get used to this kind of thing.

Eventually the band arrived and after a little bit of visiting, were presented with some awards from the record company. Then it was my turn, and as I walked up to the band, speaking to Keith directly, I presented them with their Best of Wisconsin Concert of 1977 award. Everyone applauded, and the flash bulbs started going off. Robert got a good one of the four of us, me standing between Keith Emerson and Greg Lake. The funniest part about that was when we ran the picture in our music news section, the photo caption read Emerson, Severson, Lake and Palmer! I bet I'm the first person who ever got in between those famous initials in print.

After the awards they spent some more time visiting with their guests, and as a favor to Robert, I took a picture of him together with Keith Emerson. He was such a wreck that night, that my shot was one of the best ones out of all the pictures he had taken! (Maybe I should have brought my own camera.) Pretty soon it was time for the stars to leave, and they said good-bye

to a few people and waved good-bye to everyone else. I waved and smiled at Keith and then turned back to my friends, and continued talking when all of a sudden Robert got as white as a sheet as I felt this soft tap on my shoulder. I turned around to find Keith Emerson standing behind me. He said it was nice seeing me again, and bent over and kissed me on the cheek. Then he said good evening to all of us and walked out. Those English gentlemen, they really know how to impress a girl!

When I got home I had a letter from Barry waiting for me. He and Cliff were still waiting in England for a clearance to fly to Australia. The holdup had pushed everything back by at least a month. Now he thinks he won't be back in the States until mid-May.

By the end of January, I received another postcard from Barry saying that they had finally arrived in Australia. I know they were planning on playing a few dates before going into the studio, but because of the delay everything got cancelled.

He described Australia as being hot and humid with palm trees and beaches, much different than England or Wisconsin for that matter. The rehearsals for the album were going along really well, and he thought that they had some great new songs for it . They were doing all their rehearsing at night so Barry could do his "tourist thing" during the day.

Soon another letter arrived from the Corban Hotel in Coogee, a suburb of Sydney, and Barry said the rehearsals were done and recording was going to start that following Tuesday. He went on to explain how they had been in the

studio until 6:30 am and when they came out it was such a beautiful day that they decided not to waste it. So Barry, Phil and Cliff went back to the hotel and Phil collected his fishing rod and they headed off to the beach. They sat up on the cliffs with just the sound of the sea crashing against the rocks. I guess they didn't catch anything, but still had a great time wandering about.

Barry described the Corban Hotel as small, about thirty rooms, but nice. They had all rearranged their rooms, taken grotty pictures down and added plants. Phil brought a huge stereo with him, and they had a fridge and a cooler so they didn't have to spend a lot of money in restaurants. As far as Barry was concerned, he was going to survive on fruit, milk and the occasional cheese sandwich!

Barry thought that Australia seemed a bit behind the times, that it was a cross between America and England, as though they couldn't adopt a certain life style. This was his opinion of course, and it was early 1978. He said they seemed to be very shielded from the outside world, and they didn't get a lot of news from overseas. The government had strict control over their television and radio. The band was having a good time, happy to have a rest from touring. Barry said what they are putting down in the studio was excellent. He thought I'll love it. "It's more powerful and a lot classier, not just "crash, bang, wallop!" Then he went on to say that the band read my interview and liked it, but a couple of them couldn't remember the gig or the interview, "not that they were drunk or anything..." Barry really liked the opening article before the interview, he thought I had used a very original approach.

The Australian tour they had planned on was cancelled because the Australian embassy would not allow Englishmen to work for the band. The European tour also got cancelled , so they were planning on doing a short English tour before they hit the States again.

After another twelve hour night in the studio, Barry dashed off another postcard. He said everything was shaping up just fine and it looked like they would be finished in two to three weeks. I later found out that Barry helped Bon write some of the lyrics while they were working on the album. Since he was calling and writing me so much during that time, and they had received and read my article on them, I'd like to think they had me in mind when Bon mentions the name Susie in the song "Down Payment Blues." The least I can hope for is that I was included along with the other Susies in their lives. I can dream, can't I?

I also received a letter from Coral Browning, she and Michael Browning were AC/DC's managers and I had sent them a copy of my article. She said she thought it was quite amusing and went on to say that she had received a postcard from Barry and Cliff. They wrote her that the album was sounding great and she said she couldn't wait to hear it. This release would be their first album that would start to get America's attention. To this day it remains one of my all-time favorite AC/DC albums. They aptly entitled it *Powerage*.

Chapter 8

Before Spinal Tap

My next assignment was the Angel/Godz concert at the Riverside Theatre in Milwaukee. I had an interview scheduled with Angel after their show, so I did a phone interview with the bass player from The Godz before they came into our area. The Godz were ahead of their time with their raunchy black leather-jacketed rock 'n' roll.

Angel was a light rock band that leaned heavily on Gregg Giuffria's keyboards. They appeared on stage in cubes ala Spinal Tap, and used a hologram to announce the band. They were ahead of their time with their illusions, but were mainly five guys dressed all in white glittery jumpsuits sporting incredible hair. Of course I had to take Terry and Katy along with me, I couldn't keep all that hair and glitter to myself!

Their show was interesting, but I think Terry fell asleep during the concert! If anyone saw Angel live, you know where Rob Reiner got the idea for the movie Spinal Tap: especially the part in the movie when they all appear on stage in clear pods and the bass player's pod won't open. The best part of the whole night was their skintight jumpsuits. I really couldn't see any panty lines underneath them, so the view was very nice, thank you. The most talented band member was Gregg, who went on to play in House Of Lords and his own band, Giuffira.

After the show I interviewed the singer, Frank Dimino, and their guitarist Punky Meadows. Frank was very nice to talk to, but Punky acted like he knew he was good looking and had better hair than I did. During the interview, Gregg came in and answered some questions about his keyboard guitar, which he called

his "keytar." It had a ribbon controller on the neck instead of strings, and he was in the process of marketing it.

My article ran in the issue with a new singer on the cover with the most absurd name: Elvis Costello! When I first heard his name I thought how could someone take the big E's name in vain like that? Needless to say, I was certain that he would be another one hit wonder, which might explain why I never got a job with the William Morris Agency.

Next on the agenda was one of my favorite bands: Foghat. I was scheduled to see them in Milwaukee at the Arena, then interview them two weeks later when they played Madison. Foghat was at the top of their game with their new album, Foghat Live. I had been a big fan of Foghat's ever since the first time I heard "Wild Cherry" on the radio.

They really rocked the Milwaukee audience with all their great hits, like "Fool For The City" and "Slow Ride." I was thrilled to be able to go back into their dressing room after the show and meet the band. Lonesome Dave had an Anvil case for all his custom stage clothes. He was into wearing shiny jackets with matching high top tennis shoes. He had them in silver, gold, green, red and blue. He wore them with white satin pants, very seventies! Lonesome Dave and Rod Price were very nice to me, and we sat around drinking champagne and talking. I have always been partial to English rock bands, ever since the Beatles, I'm sure. They tend to be so much more polite to talk to. If they had ego problems, they didn't flaunt it in front of the press-so unlike many American rock bands that I have met.

When they came to Madison to play the Coliseum, we also interviewed their two opening bands, Starz and Wet Willie. Starz had ex-Madisonian guitarist Richie Ranno in it, and Michael really had a good time talking with him. The best part of Wet Willie was their singer Jimmy Hall, who went on to have a successful solo career.

Once again Foghat rocked the house and drove the audience into a frenzy. All this without a mosh pit. Roger Earl had two sets of vintage 1930's drum sets with him. Both sets were black with brass hardware and engraved personalized name plates on them. Very classy!

We had a good laugh talking about their very first American concert, which was in Oshkosh, Wisconsin of all places. When they first heard about it, they didn't believe it because they had never heard of Oshkosh before. We also talked about their upcoming studio album, Stone Blue, which was due out in April of 1978. I ended up getting a blue vinyl copy of that album in the mail... remember the days of vinyl?

Foghat was going on the cover of the next Chronicle, so Michael and Tom had something very special planned . After our interview we all went into another room at the back of the Coliseum where Tom had a backdrop set up. They had decided to simulate fog in front of the band and had brought along buckets of dry ice and fans to capture the effect. It was a valiant idea, but not very practical.

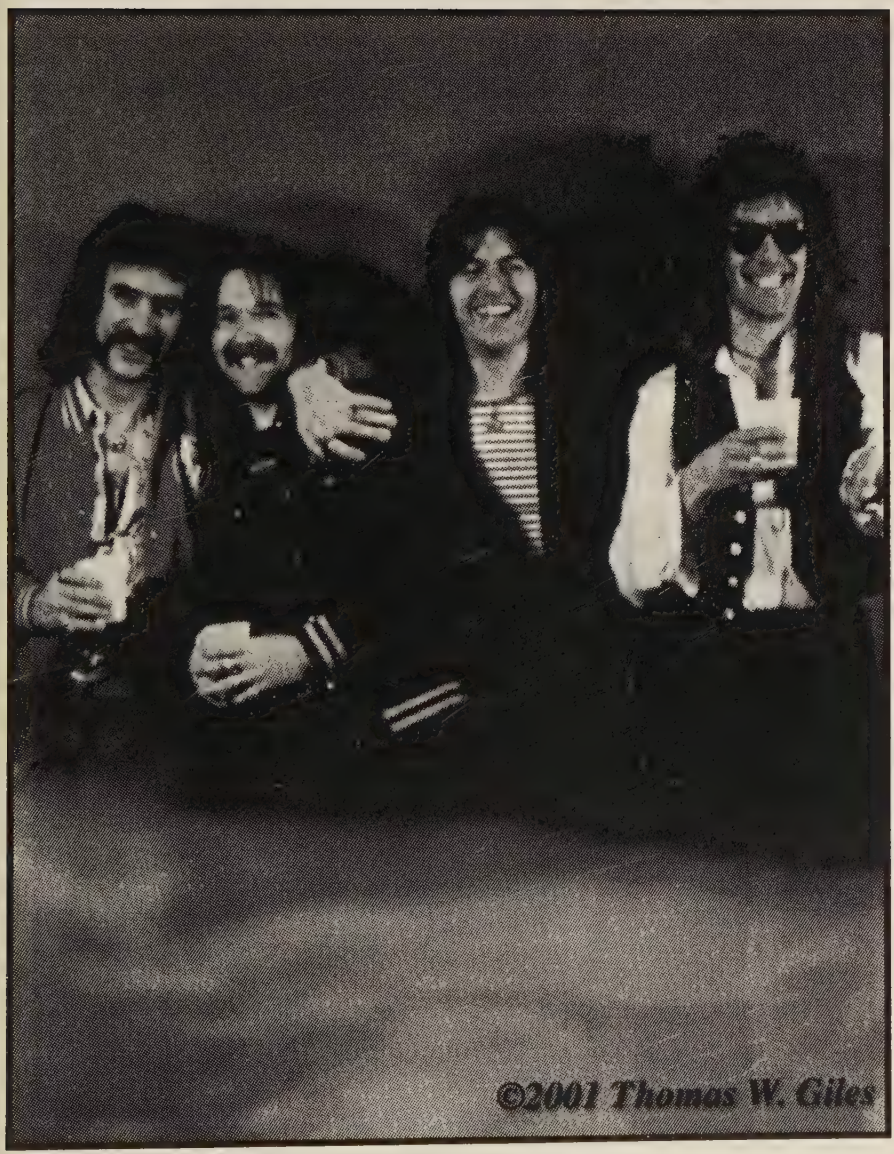
As the band posed for pictures, Eric Wuennenberg (our managing editor) and I knelt down at their feet with buckets of dry ice and tried to fan the fog in

front of the band as we melted it with warm water. Apparently this was long before fog machines... Anyway, the more we melted the dry ice and tried to fan fog, the more we got little puffs of smoke, but nothing more. The more we tried, the more we laughed. The more we laughed, the more the band laughed. Before long, the band was laughing so hard that some of them were crying. We probably looked pretty ridiculous hunched over buckets of dry ice trying to fan fog into their legs. While we were laughing, Tom kept snapping pictures and ended up with some pretty great shots.

The picture that ran on the cover had the band laughing, with Roger Earl pointing down at us laughing hysterically. To get the golden fog they were after, Tom ended up filling the men's bathroom with fog from dry ice melting in the sink, then shining an orange light through it. The shot of fog got super-imposed over the band's legs. The fog fiasco wasn't in vain though. The band liked the shot of them laughing so much that they eventually bought it from Tom and used it for an official Foghat poster!

After we gave up fighting the buckets of ice, Roger walked over to me and sliding his dark glasses down his nose, peered into my eyes and said, "Oh, they really are that blue." I was wearing tinted contact lenses at the time, but didn't want to blow his compliment by pointing that out!

When all the fog had settled, we got another colored album in the mail. This time it was red and had only four songs on it. As soon as Michael opened it up and put it on the turntable, we all went nuts! We had heard AC/DC, Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin, but this was a whole new sound.



FOGHAT

Over the next few weeks, Michael would play that record for anyone who walked into the office. Usually at the highest volume his speakers could take. Listening to those four songs, including the mind-bending "Eruption," was like putting on a pair of rose-colored glasses; the world just wasn't the same tint anymore. We were convinced that we had just discovered another Led Zeppelin. They started out as a four piece beach party band from California, and were called Van Halen.

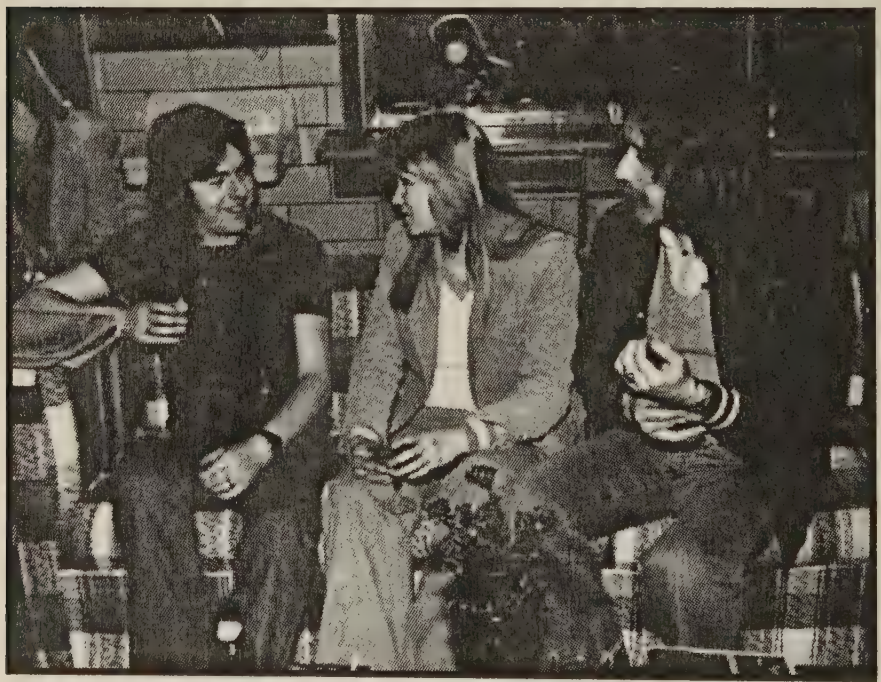


Photo by Tom Giles

Sipping bubbly with Lonesome Dave Peverett and Rod Price of Foghat Milwaukee Arena, February 1978

Chapter 9

Van Halen

Eruption

While we were publicizing the hell out of Van Halen, we finally got news about their upcoming tour with Journey and Montrose, which more than thrilled us. Until we heard about their Madison date. They were booked at the Orpheum Theatre, and because of the stage being too small to accommodate three bands, Van Halen was given the night off! Excuse me?

We couldn't believe our ears, Van Halen was coming through Madison, but they weren't going to perform. How cruel can they be? As we were hanging around the office, moaning about our bad luck, Michael looked at me and said, "Hey, what if we got them booked into another venue on the same night?" Now that to me, sounded like a plan. So I called my publicity contact at Warner Brothers and gave her probably the biggest sob story she had ever heard. I gave her two phone numbers, one for Headliners and one for the Shuffle Inn. Then we waited.

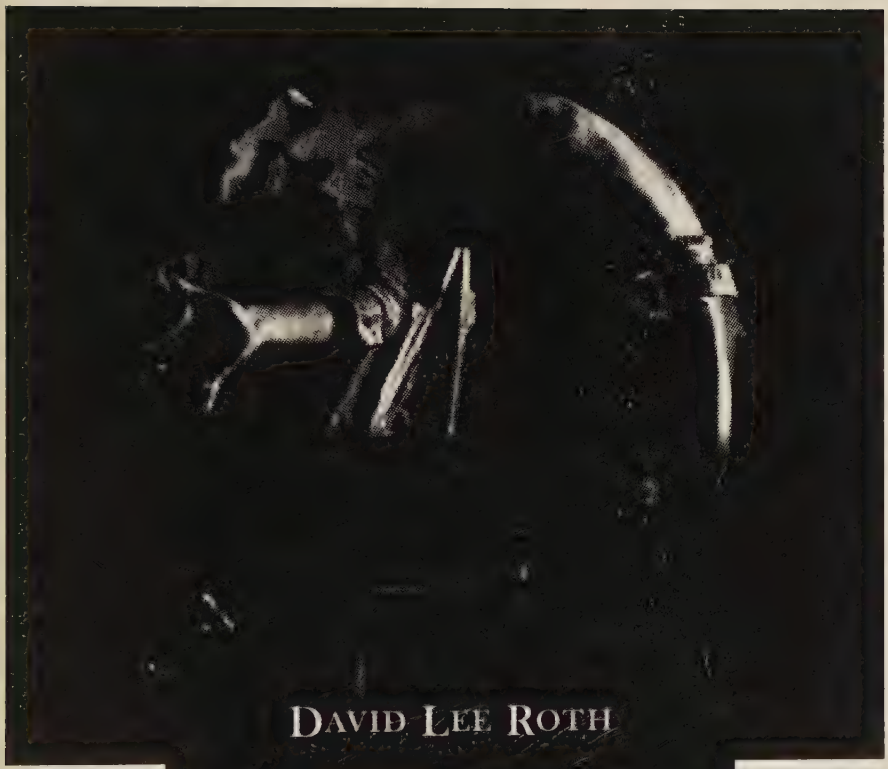
About three hours later, she called me back and said that they had booked them into the Shuffle Inn, and was that okay? Well I think she could have heard my rebel yell all the way to California without the benefit of a telephone! We jumped around yelling and screaming and acting like total idiots...I mean journalists. The date was set for Tuesday, March 7th, 1978, which happened to be the same street date for our next issue. Since the capacity for the Shuffle Inn was maybe 500 at best, we decided to keep the date a secret until the paper came out. We figured more advance warning than that would cause total mayhem.

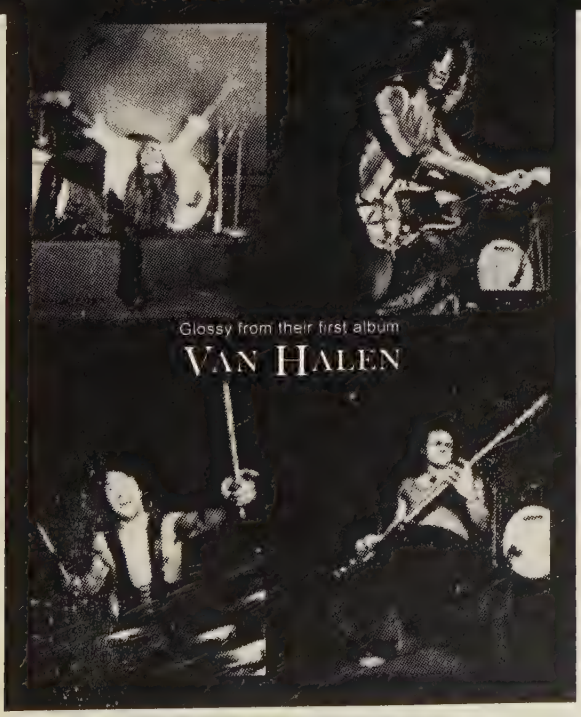
Thanks to our promotion, and Van Halen's cover of "You Really Got Me" being played constantly on the radio, all of Madison was becoming "Van Halenized." To top it off, we found out that the tour was booked at the Riverside Theatre in Milwaukee two days later, so they would be staying overnight in Madison. What a party that was going to be!

The night of their Shuffle Inn performance, Eric and I went out to dinner before we went over to the club. As always, trying to convey a professional image, I wore navy blue dress pants and a navy and white sweater. Very collegiate looking. Little did I know this wardrobe choice would figure prominently when it came time to take their pictures. Of course they were going to be on the cover of the next *Chronicle*.

When we got to the club, the band was already there relaxing in the ever so comfortable Shuffle Inn dressing room. The dressing room was in the basement of the club, and was decorated like your best friend's rec room. Paneling, low lighting, worn couches and plenty of room. It would be safe to say that at the time, the Shuffle Inn had one of the best dressing rooms out of any rock club in Wisconsin. Oh, if those walls could only talk!

We had been getting regular promo from Warner Brothers leading up to their appearance in Madison, and one of the items was a postcard of David Lee Roth in his black leather pants, on his knees with no shirt on, bent over backwards. Michael may have snagged the red vinyl disc, but I got the postcard. It hung on my bulletin board above my desk and I drooled, I mean looked at it every day.


DAVID LEE ROTH


Glossy from their first album
VAN HALEN

When we walked into the dressing room, there he was, David Lee Roth in all his blonde glory. He looked better in person, and definitely had an attitude. He looked good and he knew it. Eddie was sitting on the couch playing his guitar, wearing the shag haircut which he wore throughout most of the eighties. He was built very slight and had the cutest little ass (sorry Val). Michael Anthony looked much like he looks today, very casual and open. He was one of the friendliest in the band. Alex was taller than Eddie, a little overweight with frizzy hair and a bad complexion. He seemed to never be able to sit still. He was always smiling and doing things to make you laugh.

As Eddie sat playing through his practice amp, he told us the story about the first song he had ever learned on the guitar. Then he played it for us, it was "Pipeline." Eddie was very soft spoken and actually seemed shy. I guess with Alex and David around, there wasn't much room left to be boisterous. Michael sat down with them and did an official interview, while Tom, Eric and I listened in. Then Tom set up a backdrop and had the band pose for their cover shots. As always, when he got what he wanted, Tom said, "Go ahead Sue, jump in for a shot." Well, this band was a little overwhelming to say the least. I was slightly afraid of them and figured somebody was going to get grabbed. So I turned him down.

That really set the band off, and they all started to whine and give me a hard time about it. After a couple minutes of that, I reluctantly agreed and walked over to the backdrop and stood in front of the band. Then I glared at

them all and said, "If anybody touches me, you can forget about a picture!" Which really set them off. They all started laughing and teasing me and declaring that nobody was going to touch me. Then they took their positions. David stood to my right and ever so lightly touched my elbow, Alex leaned into my left side and I could feel his hair on my neck. Eddie bent down on my left and I never felt a thing. I thought he was just trying to get into the frame of the picture. Everyone giggled and Tom snapped the picture.

When Tom showed me the prints a few days later, he really laughed when he handed one to me. As soon as I saw the picture I immediately discovered what all the giggling was about. It looked as though Eddie had his hands around my left thigh, but because I had on wide leg dress pants, I never felt a thing! A couple of weeks later, when we took the paper with them on the cover down to their gig at Beginnings in Chicago, I had the whole band autograph a copy for me. Eddie wrote on it, "Sue, I love your thighs!" *And I thought he was shy.*

When it was time for them to get dressed for the show, there was a private bathroom downstairs which some of them used. Not David. He started to change into his black leather pants right in front of me. He didn't ask me to turn around, and I didn't offer. I may be blonde, but I'm not dumb!

By the time the band went on stage, you couldn't have squeezed a toothpick into that club. There had to have been at least a thousand people in there. I worked my way up to the front of the stage and stayed there for their whole set. To try to make it back to the bar for a drink or to the bathroom was out of the question. Where you stood you stayed.

Photo by Tom Giles

Nobody move!
Shuffle Inn, Madison, WI
March, 1978

Van Halen came out and played all of their debut album, and just blew the crowd away. Their energy level was spectacular and their individual musicianship was beyond extraordinary. Eddie's guitar playing seemed superhuman and I wasn't at all surprised to see him become a legend over the years. He changed the way everyone looked at the guitar and influenced a generation of musicians. As he still does today.

Part of his gear was a hollowed out bombshell where he had an echoplex installed. Alex had double bass drums which were actually four bass drums welded together, "to get as close to the sound of a cannon as possible." At the end of their blistering set, David shook up some bottles of champagne and sprayed the crowd with them.

It's been over twenty years since they played the Shuffle Inn, and every once in a while I'll run into someone who was there that night. They always say it is something they will never forget seeing. I would have to say seeing Van Halen for the first time in a small club just months after discovering AC/DC, remains at the top of my list of all-time great happenings.

Being a journalist in the midst of the late seventies with those two bands just emerging, must have been like living in England during the late sixties with the Beatles, the Stones and Eric Clapton running around. It was truly an amazing time in rock.

The fun really started afterwards when we all went over to the Sheraton Hotel to party with the band. There were about twenty of us and we all ended

up crowded into one of their hotel rooms. Alex and I clicked right away, even though I had a major crush on Eddie. Michael St. John brought along his tape recorder and turned it on as Alex and I sprawled across one of the beds. We had fun making comments into it. Alex was telling everybody about the night before. They were already in town, and had partied so loudly that the police kept dropping in on them. One time when the cops showed up again, Alex shoved Eddie out into the hallway and locked the door. Then he and the group of girls they had with them hid silently inside while Alex pretended he was sleeping, leaving Eddie to pound on the door begging to be let back in. He left him out in the hallway to deal with the police on his own. Eddie was not amused.

While we were observing the party, Alex leaned over and told me to start watching David. David was in the corner of the room talking to this wild looking chick with very big boobs. She had on a low cut leotard and the guy she was with (I'm assuming), had put on her lipstick and left two big red kisses on each of her breasts. Interesting. She was drooling all over David and he was lapping it up, hook, line and sinker.

Then Alex warned me to pay attention to what David was going to say. As she was cooing and giggling all over him, David leaned into this girl and said very loudly, "You know, you remind me of someone I went to high school with." She just squealed with delight and said, "Oh really?" And then he replied even louder, "Yeah, she was really obvious too." With that comment, he abruptly walked away. Ouch babe! David's mouth was a human meat grinder

if he sensed you couldn't keep up with him. I never acted like I was attracted to him, so he was actually very nice to me. I also have a very smart mouth and wasn't afraid to sass him back, which I think he kind of respected.

After a while Alex and I decided to cruise around looking for trouble, when we found Eddie in the next room alone, sitting on the bed eating an apple. When we walked in and asked him what he was doing, without saying a word, he thrust his apple into my face offering me a bite. I was so startled that I just shook my head no. Boy, do I regret not taking a good chomp out of that apple! Who knows where that would have led? Probably nowhere, because Alex wouldn't let me out of his sight. I wasn't attracted to him, but I got an enormous kick out of his craziness.

We were waiting for the roadies to show up with a cooler full of beer and Alex got impatient just sitting around. Finally he took my hand and said, "Let's go look for the boys." He dragged me down the hall into an elevator. After the doors closed and we were gliding downward, Alex started pushing the emergency button on every floor we passed. I started worrying about my decision to get into an elevator alone with him. After a few floors, he stopped the elevator and told me he had a great trick to show me. I can just imagine... When the doors opened up, he told me to hold the button keeping the door open as he jumped out into the hallway. He immediately turned around and positioned his head between the doors. Then he told me to let go of the button. I refused and started having visions of his head squashing like a pumpkin and the newspaper headlines the next day reading, *Journalist Kills Van Halen Drummer*

In Freak Elevator Accident! I kept refusing to let go of the button until Alex ordered me to let go or I wasn't going anywhere until I did. So I let go of the button and the doors closed on his temples and immediately sprung back open. What looked very painful to me, was extremely hilarious to Alex. Laughing wildly, he jumped back into the elevator, grabbed me and threw me out into the hallway demanding that I do the same thing. At this moment it looked as if Alex wasn't going anywhere for awhile, and it was unlikely that I could outrun him. So being the adventurous journalist that I am, I too smashed my head between the elevator doors. Actually I think I mixed up adventurous with insane, but cooperating with this stunt sent Alex into such a fit of laughter, that he fell into the wall and slid down to the floor. He said no one in the band or on the road crew would do that trick with him and that they were never going to believe that I actually did. You see, Alex and I were soulmates.

DAVID MICHAEL EDDIE ALEX

Photos by Tom Giles

Van Halen

Chapter 10

Runnin' With The Devil

Although Van Halen and Journey stayed in Madison the next night (and had one hellacious party according to Michael), I had to go to a showcase in Chicago that CBS Records was throwing for the Hounds. They were the same band that opened for AC/DC at the Stone Hearth. I wasn't all that impressed with them, but a trip to Chicago with a free night at the Playboy Club was too good to pass up. And I accepted the invitation without realizing Van Halen and Journey would stay in town, I figured they would stay in Milwaukee and get ready for their gig Thursday night at the Riverside Theatre. I love field trips, and this was going to be better than sitting on the phone setting up interviews and photo shoots. When I heard what fun Michael had at the Sheraton Hotel with the guys that night, I wished I would have stayed in town! Alex got so wild, he almost pushed a table out the window of their seventh floor room. Supposedly the mention of the damages coming out of his pay-check was the only thing that stopped him.

Some of the other pranks they pulled during their three night stay, was stealing sheets for the tour bus and duct taping frozen fish to the ceiling of the hallway. Apparently the dedication to the seventh floor of the Sheraton Hotel in Madison, WI on the back of their second album was very much deserved.

When we got to the Playboy Club to check in, I was given a single room and carte blanche, courtesy of CBS Records. Ummm, maybe I liked the Hounds after all? We threw our bags in the room and took off to the Park West to see

the Hounds showcase. There would be a free bar and dinner; now this was my idea of covering a band!

Before they played their set, a silver-haired record executive in black leather jeans gushed on about the band for a while, then excitedly introduced them. They had a great record deal and a lot of money behind them, but they were a lackluster rock band that I think released only one album. It was a great party, but we definitely were not dazzled by them.

We left early and returned to the Playboy Club just in time to enjoy their late night buffet. We ate wonderful food and consumed several free bottles of champagne. Yes, I realize this was dishonest, but show me a rock journalist that wouldn't have done the same thing. Record companies barely give away free t-shirts anymore. Those were the salad days-record companies with tons of money to spend on publicity, I remember the pre-recession days fondly. Then you could make a living in the music business on most levels. Now the record companies expect free publicity in exchange for tickets and interviews. No more parties for the working class.

The next day I had Corkey drop me off at the Riverside Theatre as we drove up through Milwaukee. I was going to meet Michael and Ezra and ride back to Madison with them. This week was qualifying as my wildest week ever, right up there along with the Kiss-AC/DC weekend.

I got there in the late afternoon, so I ended up sitting around talking with Van Halen's manager, Noel Monk. We talked about the next single being picked

from the album, and I suggested "Running With The Devil." He said everyone was voting for that one. Then I told him the Van Halen logo would look great as a hood ornament, or even a necklace. Years later I smiled when I saw Valerie Bertinelli wearing a necklace on her television show, One Day At A Time. Their logo did look good as jewelry!

When Michael finally got there, he was all excited about the fact that Barry had tried calling me from Australia. I was happy to hear that he would try to call back again the next afternoon.

Once again we were riveted by Van Halen's performance. They were really hot and I knew they were going to set the world ablaze. Montrose and Journey were good, too. Earlier that day I had also met Dan, one of Journey's roadies who ended up letting me sit with him next to the spotlight and watch Journey's set. This was just after they had hired Steve Perry, and his vocals and their new songs were really good. Their show was extremely tight and Steve's voice was a perfect addition for them.

After the concert, we stood around watching them tear down the equipment when Michael pointed out a very heavy-set man and said, "That's Leslie West!" Michael was a big fan of his, I on the other hand, just knew of "Mississippi Queen." We walked up to him and when I extended my hand and introduced myself, he shook it heartily and told me he was a great fan of my writing! He said, "My manager Charlie brings the *Chronicles* home all the time, and I always read your stuff!" Well you could have knocked me over with a feather, I was

so stunned. We instantly struck up a conversation. He told me he was living with his manager in Milwaukee, and wanted to stay in touch with the music scene. He had come down to the theater to see "that Van Halen kid" everyone was talking about. Then he asked me if he could call me at the paper. Of course I said yes.

Leslie would end up calling me on and off for the next couple of years. We eventually did an official interview with him for the Chronicle. One night I even got him to come into Madison, to the Shuffle Inn to see Punch. He arrived in a limo with a bodyguard, and sat at my table which was towards the back near the dressing room door. People kept coming up to him all evening talking to him and getting autographs. It was great fun hosting a real celebrity at one of the local clubs. Leslie was, and still is, a legendary guitar player in his own right, and it has been an honor for me to have known him.

We ended up partying in Journey's dressing room before leaving for home. I really wanted to meet their drummer, Ansley Dunbar, for my 'Great Drummers of the World' Collection. He was occupied with a good-time girl on his lap. I eventually said hello to him and I told him my Gene Krupa story. This never fails to impress a serious drummer. I figured if he didn't know who Gene Krupa was, I didn't want to meet him anyway! When I mentioned the "Great One," Ansley pushed the girl off of his lap and made a place for me on the couch next to him. Aren't I terrible? All we did was visit for a while, then I went out to the staircase to get some air. The dressing rooms in the Riverside are very small and claustrophobic.

There was a very young looking guy sitting on the steps who introduced himself and said that he worked for Landmark Productions, a large promotion company that had recently started giving me trouble over free tickets and passes to shows in Milwaukee and Alpine Valley. When I found out who he worked for, I really gave him a piece of my mind. I told him he could talk to the big guys and tell them that the Chronicle gets tickets from everybody else and I couldn't believe that they were giving me a hard time about getting my staff into their shows.

A couple of days later I walked into the office and Michael was standing there waiting for me with a letter in his hand and a big smile on his face. He said, "Remember that guy from Landmark Productions that you told off the other night in Milwaukee? Well he is the President of Landmark, Alan Dulberger." Then he handed me the letter. It was on official Landmark stationary, signed by the big guy himself. It read: Dear Sue, It was nice meeting you yesterday at the Journey/ Ronnie Montrose/Van Halen concert at the Riverside Theatre. Landmark Productions will always be very open to helping your paper grow as long as the paper acts as a music paper and not a go-between with competitors and you continue to use promotional tickets for the purpose of reporting concerts. Again, it was nice talking with you and Landmark Productions will definitely support your paper. If you need any help with interviews we will do everything we can to assist you. Sincerely, Alan Dulberger, President. I was a hero in the office for at least one whole day.

Barry did call the next day, and I laughed about the fact that it was Friday afternoon for me and Saturday morning for him. I asked him if Saturday was worth getting up for. He was enjoying the sunny weather and said that the new album was sounding brilliant. Then the fire alarm went off in the office and we couldn't hear well enough to continue talking!

I was gearing up for our next issue with Van Halen on the cover. I was also working on my next assignment, which was going to the Coliseum to interview Nazareth and Head East. I talked to Dan McCafferty, the singer for Nazareth and he was on crutches. He had ripped both Achilles tendons jumping off of the drum riser earlier in the tour. He had to continue performing while sitting on a stool. He did a great job that night, including belting out "Now You're Messin' With A Son Of A Bitch" from a chair!

The following week, Michael, his girlfriend Melody, Katy, John (Punch guitarist and my future husband), and I threw a couple of bundles of papers into the trunk and drove down to Schaumburg, Illinois to see Van Halen play at the club Beginnings. It was the Loop, (a Chicago radio station's) birthday party. Once again Van Halen put on a terrific performance, and helped set a fire in the hearts of many Chicago area fans.

After the show, we tried to get by the gigantic security dudes standing at the dressing room door. Not until Michael shoved a stack of papers in one of their faces did they agree to let us in. The band was involved in a full scale celebration of their Chicago appearance. Alex immediately ran up to me, and after

discovering that I had the audacity to bring a date, he grabbed me and threw me over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes. Not only was he still very sweaty from the show, but he wouldn't put me down for the longest time. Alex really wanted to piss John off. Luckily John struck up a conversation with Eddie and persuaded him to show him his guitars. Eddie let him look them over, but wouldn't let him play one.

We had a great time partying with them. The record company executives were really happy with us, saying that we were the first newspaper to put Van Halen on their cover. We were on the A-list with Warner Brothers after that. I even got offered a job with their company once, but it was only at a regional office somewhere in the Midwest.

When it was time to go, we each got a Chronicle signed by the band. As I mentioned before, Eddie wrote "Sue, Love your thighsssss," David wrote, "Sue, I need you badly!," Michael wrote, "Sue, I sure like your stuff!," and Alex wrote his name down his right arm, put an anchor on his left arm, wrote "Suk Me" on Michael's left arm and never signed his full name... drummers. You can't live with them, you can't live without them.

It has been no surprise to me that over twenty years later, Van Halen is still one of the biggest rock bands in the world. I was disappointed when David left, I think he added the Hollywood glamour that was fun to watch on stage. As I was writing this, it was announced that David was back in the studio with the band working on a greatest hits package due to be released in September of

1996. But unfortunately their reunion didn't last.

When I wrote a story on them in the debut issue of my own music paper Rock Central, I used their original press kit that I received in 1978. One paragraph still rings true: "(They) celebrate the sex and rebellion on televison, all the rockin' on the radio, the movies, the cars and everything about being young or semi-young or young at heart. That's Van Halen."

Chapter 11

David Bowie

Fame

I got a letter from Barry the second week of April saying that he was back home in England. *Powerage* was finished and the band felt it was the best they had come up with yet. It was due to be released on May 1st, 1978. Barry said he would have their publicist Coral, send me a copy as soon as she got some in her hands.

They were getting ready for a tour of the United Kingdom which was originally going to be eight or nine shows. Since they had come back from Australia, the demand for them had grown and the tour was upped to twenty-eight dates. Which moved back their original plans to hit the States in April, now it looked like it would be early June.

At least they were planning on spending a lot of time in the States that year, the tour was going to start in Texas and they would work their way up to Wisconsin. Some European festival dates were booked for the end of August, but then they would be back here for at least another twelve weeks.

On top of that, AC/DC was planning on doing a live album with concerts to be filmed in England and the States. Barry wrote that he thought the ones in the States would be shot in San Antonio and Jacksonville, because they were quite popular "down south y'all!" I was quickly realizing our relationship would be mainly long distance. When I last saw him in December, I didn't realize it would be such a long time before we would see each other again. The more popular the band got, the more bookings they got. I was such a big fan myself that I was happy for them, but in a way I was a little selfish, too.

In my own way I had helped turn people on to AC/DC, but I never thought about the fact that the bigger they got, the less I would see of them!

In his letter he also included some pictures of Sydney, taken around where they were staying. The ocean and cliffs looked beautiful. He also mentioned his friend in Los Angeles, a songwriter, who was going to be playing with some guys from Santana and Peter Green, the original guitarist from Fleetwood Mac. A couple of his friends in England were planning on moving to the States, and he was thinking about it himself. He loved England, but said that the unemployment and general bad vibes made it hard for him to stay motivated.

Two weeks later I received another letter, this time from London. Barry was staying with friends and said that the band had just arrived from Australia. They gave him a letter I had sent him after he had left for England. I wrote him about recently having strep throat and he had to laugh because he thought he was the only one in the world that got a yearly case of it. One more thing we seemed to have in common.

The band was in London for a two day rehearsal before their tour started. Barry, Ian (their road manager), Malcolm and Cliff had gone to what Barry described as a boring gig at the Music Machine, a newly opened, very chic place in trendy Camden Town, a punk area in London. Suzi Quatro was playing and he described her as being dreadful, out of tune and totally unexciting. Some of you might remember Suzi from her television role on Happy Days. She never really

got that popular over here, but was an established star in England.

Their British tour was selling well, London was already sold-out. Barry went on to tell me about Ian's girlfriend from Milwaukee. It seems he had a bit of an encounter with a woman named Rose the night they played at the Electric Ballroom. I remember she even called me at the paper the next day asking questions about the band. Barry said she rings him up a lot and sends telegrams, and Ian is more into "circumstantial relationships, if you know what I mean." Ah, the trials and tribulations of women who love musicians.

Over the years I would meet many girls that had relationships with one band member or another. Some of them were regulars who you would always see in a certain city. In 1983 I met a woman named Jane while I was backstage at Madison Square Garden seeing AC/DC. She had been an intimate friend of the band's, and we talked about the good old days when Bon was still alive. She couldn't believe that I had never slept with any of them. I think that has been the key to my long lasting friendship with the band. Once you sleep around, they don't want to see you again. Especially if any of the wives or girlfriends have come along on the road with them.

Now the beginning of their American tour was scheduled for June 14th, Barry said it kept getting pushed back further and further. He thought he should probably stop asking about it!

Luckily things were moving at breakneck speed at the paper, and I didn't have time to dwell on missing Barry. He was such a faithful friend that I knew I

would always hear from him every couple of weeks no matter what part of the world he was in.

Aside from seeing the Stranglers, Elvis Costello and the Atlanta Rhythm Section in concert, I was lined up to go to Milwaukee to see David Bowie and interview his band. I was a huge fan of David's and even though we were unable to book an interview with him personally, I was thrilled to be getting a chance to meet his band.

Since there were seven members in the band, I was going to split up the interview with Steven Grant and Michael Alroy. All three of us went to Milwaukee early in the day on Monday, April 24th, to meet with Bowie's "band of gold" at the Marc Plaza Hotel.

We first met David's rhythm section, rhythm guitarist Carlos Alomar, bassist George Murray and drummer Dennis Davis. They had played on the last four Bowie albums. Carlos was the band leader and the most talkative of the three. He had started working with David on the "Young Americans" tour and was credited with co-composing some of David's songs.

After spending some time in Carlos's room, we went on to interview pianist Sean Mayes, guitarist Adrian Belew, violinist Simon House and synthesist Roger Powell. Adrian had previously worked with King Crimson and Frank Zappa, and it was at a Zappa concert in Berlin where David Bowie first spotted him. When I asked Adrian about the differences between playing for Frank Zappa compared to David Bowie, he replied, "It's more fun with David, because he's

in that frame of mind now. At least for me on stage, it is. There's a lot of rock and roll, I can jump around! With Frank it was more regimented. More strict, but I like that, too. It's just two completely different schools of thought there."

I eventually caught up with Roger Powell at the hotel after the show; he wasn't around when we were doing our interviews, so afterwards I went back to the hotel to track him down. Being a big fan of Todd Rundgren and Utopia, I wasn't about to pass up the chance to meet Roger.

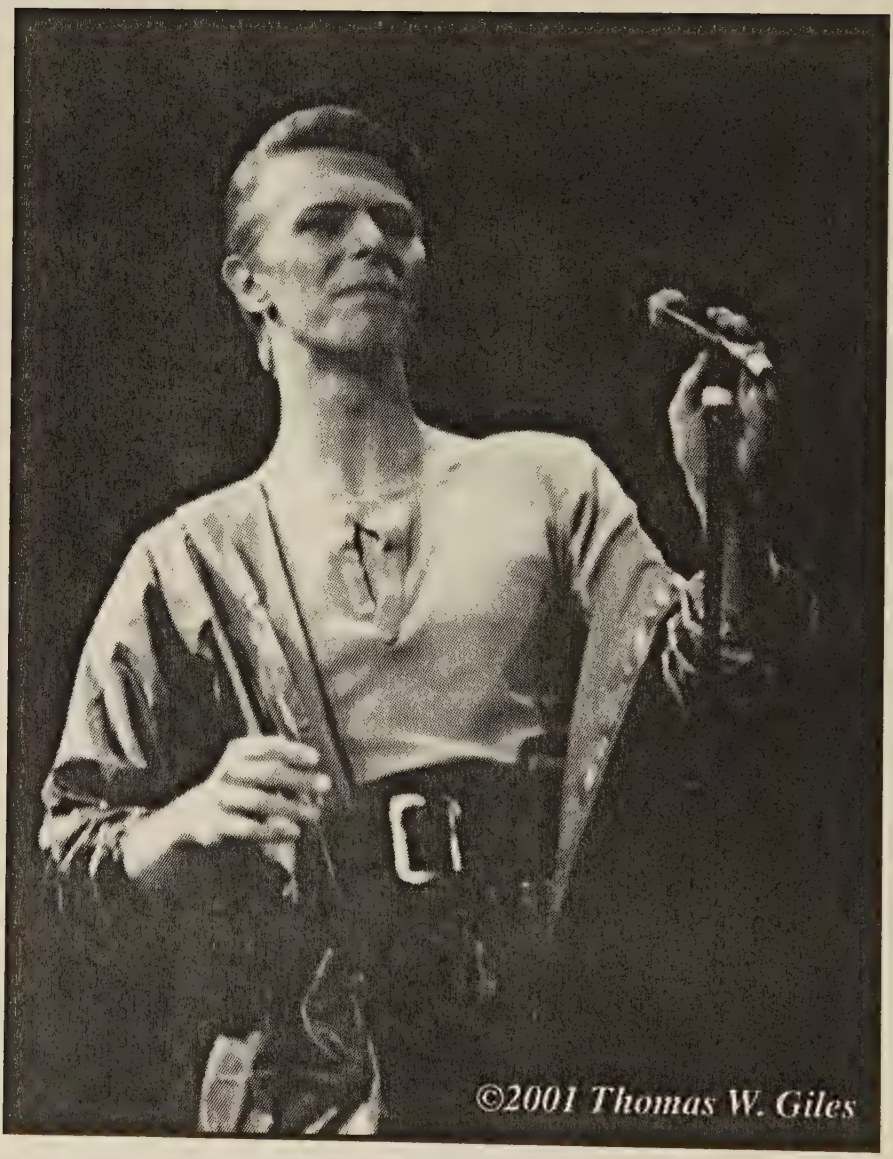
What was funny about the whole band, was that they were all thrilled and honored to be playing with Bowie. Each one had their own stories about receiving "*the* phone call." They all seemed very unassuming and eager to talk about their good fortune. They each were also amazing musicians.

The concert that night was unforgettable, I had never seen Bowie perform live, and I wasn't at all disappointed. Of course the band was incredible, but David was the one you couldn't take your eyes off of. He was so mesmerizing it was hard for me to watch anyone else on stage. He was dressed in a simple shirt and shiny pants, and had his hair slicked straight back. I had fallen in love with Ziggy Stardust and rocked through *Diamond Dogs* and *Pin Ups*, I was totally in awe of David Bowie. His concert remains one of my favorite live performances.

The next day when I walked back into the office, Michael and Corkey were glaring at me and asked why I hadn't called in from the concert... well, maybe because I never call in from a concert? It seems Leslie

West, who had been calling me on a regular basis, called the office before the concert looking for a way to get in touch with me. He said he was having dinner with David after the show and wanted to invite me along. Talk about missing the chance of a lifetime! I had never before called to check in from any of my assignments, and this was years before cell phones and beepers, only James Bond had those kinds of toys.

I was disappointed that I had missed out on such an opportunity, but actually I can't imagine having dinner with David Bowie. I would have stared at him the whole time. I rarely had problems talking to rock stars, but the more I admired them, the harder it was to act casual around them. David Bowie was definitely in that "speechless" category. Interviewing his band was close enough.



David Bowie

Chapter 12

Leslie West

Scenes From An Imaginary Midwestern

April and May brought all kinds of performers to the Madison/Milwaukee area: Lou Reed came to town with none other than Ian Dury as his opening act. Just as Barry predicted, Ian started to gain a name for himself with his anthem, "Sex and Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll," although that's as far as his career went over here in the States.

Bob Seger came through promoting his new album *Stranger In Town*, REO Speedwagon had just released *You Can Tune A Piano, But You Can't Tuna Fish*, and everyone in the office was talking about the "Boss," Bruce Springsteen, coming to town. I have never been a big fan of Bruce's, but with his music, live performances and the incredible E Street Band, he has certainly earned his rock 'n' roll icon status.

Barry called at the end of April from Scotland: AC/DC was on the road taking care of their UK tour. Things were really looking up for the band, their shows were selling out and *Powerage* was going to be released soon.

Things at the newspaper were going well on the outside, but the offices were turning into a fraternity house, thanks to Ralph and Ezra living there while they were in-between apartments. I finally blew up on them one day when I came into work to find clothes all over the place, stuff all over my desk and the strong smell of dirty socks in the air. After a heated discussion with Corkey, Ralph and Ezra were asked to find an apartment immediately. Other than that incident, I got along pretty well with the boys. Of course Michael and I had our power

struggles. I used to fight him tooth and nail if he wanted to edit something I wrote. God forbid that I should be censored! One time in the beginning of our relationship, Michael was upset with me because I wouldn't stretch out an article to take up more print space. I told him that I had said my piece on the subject and that was it, take it or leave it. Michael accused me of writing like Walter Cronkite... It seems to have worked out all right for Walter.

I kept hearing from Leslie West, who was getting bored hanging out in Milwaukee. He liked to keep up on the new bands playing in the area, and I think keeping in touch with me at the paper helped him feel more in touch with the music business. Naturally we wanted to do an official interview with him, and I set that up for May 15, 1978. Eric and I drove to Leslie's manager's office in downtown Milwaukee.

Of course the first thing we talked about was why he was living in the Midwest instead of being in his hometown of New York. He had been wrestling with legal problems stemming from Mountain and West, Bruce and Laing. That was his collaboration with bassist Jack Bruce and drummer Corkey Laing. He and his manager Charlie had gone to school together in Forest Hills, New York. When Leslie ran into trouble, Charlie called him up and asked him to come out to Wisconsin, and let him handle his business for him. As Leslie put it (Milwaukee) is not exactly a cultural Mecca, but the same concerts come to Milwaukee that come to New York-you don't miss anything in the way of shows. "I still think of New York as my home-but once you're in the office it doesn't matter where you are. Everybody's just a phone call away."

Over sodas, he went on to talk about his guitar playing style, which has always been one of the most unique styles in rock. "I copied Eric Clapton as much as I could. I copied Albert King and B.B. King. But I knew that if you worked hard and long enough, some day everything you had learned would turn into something you could call your own. I remember the day it finally happened. We were in the studio recording *Mountain Climbing* and I was going home one morning after a session, and realized that I had just played a solo for the song, "Theme For An Imaginary Western" that I was really proud of-that I would like to put my name on-my signature-that this was MY solo for the first time, my trademark. That's when I realized that maybe I really had something." He went on to talk about his future plans to record a new album and get back out on the road again. He closed out our interview with this quote, "I guess when I finally end up in a wheel chair and somebody has to come and push me around the home, I'll still be looking for an audience."

Leslie has kept active in the business over the years. He's put out more albums with various groups and even appeared in the film "Money Pit" with Tom Hanks and Shelley Long. Even though he never again reached the popularity of his band Mountain, Leslie West has certainly earned a place in rock and roll history for his extraordinary guitar playing.

Years later, Leslie moved back to New York City, and I moved there in 1983. A friend of ours, Mark Kaufman, was a session drummer who had just finished working with Leslie, so as soon as I got into town, I talked Mark into calling

Leslie for me so I could say hello. After much begging, he left a message on his answering machine and within fifteen minutes, Leslie himself called me back. He was in deep anquish over the recent passing of Mountain's drummer, Felix Pappalardi, who had just been shot by his wife in a domestic dispute. Leslie told me to keep in touch with him, and I got so caught up in my own pursuits in New York that I never did call him back! So Leslie, if you read this, call me!

I got a short letter and a *Powerage* t-shirt from Barry on May 18th postmarked from Golchester. He was grateful that spring had finally shown up and that they had even gotten some sunshine over there! They were playing a gig in Golchester, which is an old Roman town close to the east coast of England. Barry described their amazing old houses, and said there were lots of little villages which have remained untouched for hundreds of years.

The band had to cancel a couple of concerts the week before because Angus was sick, but he recovered quickly and they hit the road again. Of course the cancelled dates got rescheduled, more dates got added to the end of the tour and you guessed it, their American tour got pushed back again!

I got another letter from Barry's hometown of Buckden Cambs, England dated June 1st. He said the British tour finished officially on Monday in Dundee, Scotland, however they had to play those rescheduled dates the next week. He said the audience reaction had been really good, judging from the fact that British audiences are rather reserved, but they had been going crazy for the band on tour. Barry laughingly said that there was some hope for the band yet!

He also enclosed some postcards of the area he lived in. It's so quiet there that after a while the boredom can really creep in. Believe it or not, the closest cinema was sixteen miles away, and there were a lot of towns in Britain like that. Two of the postcards were from Godmanchester. Barry used to live there and most of his friends still do. He said it was very much a "head place, if you know what I mean." He wanted me to come visit there sometime. If I do, I'm going to pass on the holiday pudding!

The band and the crew had a meeting with their manager, Michael Browning about the upcoming U.S. tour. They would be flying over on or around June 19th. Their first gig would be in West Virginia on the 26th with Alice Cooper, which they were looking forward to. Michael surprised Barry over breakfast one morning by asking him about me! Barry said it just came out of the blue and Michael went on to say that he was fixing up some dates in my area, including a definite date in Chicago.

They are going to have a couple more roadies with them this time, one to do the lights and one to take care of Angus. Barry was supposed to take care of Phil and his drums, but he wrote: "I daresay I'll still manage to run around with Angus, I've carried him around on my shoulders a couple of times on this tour, which was fun." He said he would call me as soon as they get to New York. I can't believe they're (finally) almost here. Look out America!

Chapter 13

Ted Nugent

Hey Baby

We went to a huge concert at the Milwaukee County Stadium at the end of May. Along with the headliners Jefferson Starship, were Foreigner and Nazareth. I rode with Michael and Tom, and we stopped and picked up Michael's friend, Marty Racine, who was reviewing the show for the paper.

The bands were really good and the weather was perfect. I had more fun hanging out backstage watching the rock stars come and go. This was at the height of Jefferson Starship's fame and the aura around them was palpable, especially Grace Slick and Paul Kantner, the mama and papa of the Jefferson Airplane, in my book. I was so in awe of their legendary sixties acid rock group status, that I didn't talk to any of them!

We all went over to the Pfister Hotel after the concert for a buffet dinner. I sat and talked with some of Foreigner, but mainly watched Grace and company from afar. She was reportedly on the wagon, and did not look like a happy camper. She was sharing the vocalist spotlight with Mickey Thomas, and was probably not too thrilled with the arrangement. They put on a good performance, but Grace is hardly the kind of singer who needs support on stage. It was great just being that close to her. She was to become the first woman rocker to "grace" a cover of the Chronicle.

The month of June 1978 was really busy. AC/DC was on their way over here, Bruce Springsteen was coming to Madison for the first time, and the big finale was the Grand Slam Jam at the Milwaukee Stadium. Headlining were Ted Nugent, together with Heart, Cheap Trick and Journey. Ted was also

appearing at the Brown County Arena in Green Bay on June 9th. Michael and Tom drove up there to catch his show. Michael also did another interview with Ted which would appear on the next cover. We wanted to use the picture that was taken that night in December at the Coliseum here in Madison, which was the shot of Ted clenching a long stemmed red rose between his teeth and leaning into the camera. They decided to shoot another one while up in Green Bay, because Ted was clean shaven due to a safari in Africa which was "hotter than a buffalo's asshole." Ted has always had such a way with words.

Ted's mother, eventually known as Ma Nugent (when she wrote a column for a national rock magazine in the early eighties), could often be seen backstage at any of Ted's concerts. I had also run into her at a couple of AC/DC concerts, because she was also a big fan of theirs. One night Tom Giles decided to ask Ma for a picture, posing the same way as Ted did for our cover. She gladly obliged, and when Ted came to Milwaukee for the Grand Slam Jam, Michael presented him with a framed 11" by 17" picture of his mother clenching a rose between her teeth and flashing that crazed Nugent grin Ted is so famous for. Now we know where he got it from!

When I came to work the day after Michael and Tom were up in Green Bay seeing Ted, they both smiled and said he had sent a gift back for me and that they had put it in my top desk drawer. I was more than surprised, I couldn't believe Ted remembered me from December. My gift was an 8" by 10" black and white glossy with his autograph on the front and an hilarious inscription on the back. It read: *To Sweet Sue, I need you baby like this dog needs his bone.*

Come to me now. Young Ted. Now I was looking forward to the Grand Slam Jam more than ever!

On June 14th I finally got the mother lode in the mail, a copy of AC/DC's new album, *Powerage*. It was from their managers, and Coral Browning had included a nice note. She wrote: "*Dear Sue, Hope you like the album-and that the t-shirt fits! Cheers, Coral P.S. PLAY LOUD. The single in U.K. "Rock 'n' Roll Damnation" is in charts first week at 51."*

Well I definitely played it loud, over and over again. It's still one of my favorite AC/DC albums. All the songs rock, but I especially like "Gone Shootin," it has such a funky groove to it. Of course I also like the fact that Bon used the name Susie in "Down Payment Blues."

Finally on June 21st, Barry called from New York, the band had arrived Stateside and they were getting ready to rock America!

The Grand Slam Jam was scheduled for the 30th, but there was a press party at the Marriot Hotel in Milwaukee the night before. Afterwards, I was scheduled to interview Ted back at his hotel.

I went to the party with Michael, and that's where we presented Ted with the picture of his Mom. He freaked out when he saw his mom posing the same way he had, with a rose between her teeth. The day started out early and by the time the press party was in full swing, Michael had caught quite a buzz. We were supposed to meet Ted back at his hotel in downtown Milwaukee after he had gone to the Stadium to do a sound check.

To kill time after the party, Michael and I went to a radio station in town to visit one of his friends. I think it was at least 10 or 11 pm before we met Ted and his publicist at his hotel.

Ted and I sat down on a loveseat and shared a big bag of Bing cherries. (Ted kept spitting his pits back into the bag). While I did an interview with his publicist looking on, Michael passed out on the bed.

Ted was gushing about the upcoming concert exclaiming that they had 110,000 watts and he was going to push it to its limits. As he was getting downright feverish about it, I leaned over and asked Ted if he wore ear plugs. He abruptly stopped and said, "Of course, I'd be deaf by now if I didn't." He must not have kept up with the ear plugs because when I talked to him backstage at a Damn Yankees concert in 1990, he was completely deaf in his left ear, which is a terribly sad, but all too common casualty of rock and roll.

I asked him how he felt about the opening bands: Journey, Cheap Trick and Heart. I mentioned that I had heard all of them were going to be very hot. He said they had better be, because when he got through with the Stadium, nothing would be left standing! Ted has never had a problem with enthusiasm.

When it was time to leave, he pulled me out into the hallway and asked me to stay overnight. He said he would get me a hotel room since I had to come back the next day for the concert, why drive home? I thanked him but declined, saying that I had to give Michael a ride back to Madison, and that I hadn't packed to stay overnight. Ted tried to persuade me and told me to dump Michael somewhere, which was easier said than done. I ended up turning down an intriguing invitation, and gave Michael a ride home. Now I wish I hadn't been so cautious, and will never know the rush of being

cornered in a hotel room by the wild man himself. For some reason I have this vision of Ted swinging into bed on a rope wearing only a loincloth made from something he killed on his most recent hunting trip. Nice fantasy, huh?

The next day I took my boyfriend John with me and we went over to the Stadium early. It was a perfect June day and we listened to Journey mainly from backstage while watching all the activity as the bands came and went. When Cheap Trick went on, we walked up on stage behind the equipment to watch and were immediately thrown out by Cheap Trick's manager, Ken Adamany. Rather rude considering John was in Punch, which was also managed by Ken. Without going all the way out to the front of the Stadium, we could only hear Cheap Trick but we couldn't see them. I was so upset that when I saw Ted arrive I ran up to him and told him what had just happened. I said if we couldn't stand in back on the stage then we wouldn't be able to see him perform. Ted looked down at me with his long wavy hair and fringed coat flying in the breeze, and said, "Baby, when I go on stage, you go on stage." Then he told me not to worry, smiled, and walked back to his tent.

Ted had a double tent set up, one where the press could take pictures after the show and one where Ted's practice amp was set up. As the day wore on, we spent our time walking to and from the stage and ducking in and out of each of the band's tents. Tom Giles was setting up his cover shot in Heart's tent and we all went in to see him take their pictures after their performance. All the members of Heart were really nice except for the Wilson sisters. They never said hello to anyone and kept us waiting almost an hour before they were ready

for a picture. We visited with Roger Fisher, the guitarist who was dating Nancy at the time. He spent a lot of his time that day playing frisbee with the audience, he said he collected them. The other guitarist, Howard Leese, was also very friendly to talk to, but the girls totally ignored us while they whispered and gossiped and reapplied makeup. When they were finally ready for the cover shot we were more than happy to get it over with. I was greatly disappointed in them, they were the first real female rock stars I had ever met and they both acted rude to me. Oh well, maybe they were having a bad hair day or something.

While we were hanging out with Ted, he sat me down and picked up his guitar saying he wanted me to hear some of his new album. While John sat across the tent watching, Ted sat about two feet in front of me and played and sang "Good Friends and A Bottle of Wine." Then he asked me what I thought, and of course I declared the song a surefire hit.

After the serenade, I told Ted about John being a guitar player and asked if he would mind if John played a few licks on Ted's Byrdland guitar just for fun. Ted said sure, and as he was actually handing it to him, Neal Schon from Journey walked in, grabbed the guitar and immediately started jamming. John's chance to impress Ted were blown out of the water, so we sat down and enjoyed

Ann and Nancy Wilson of Heart

Photos by Tom Giles

watching Neal play some licks while visiting with Ted.

As the sun went down, it was getting close to Ted Time, and we were ushered out of his tent so he could dress for the show. About a half an hour later, Ted appeared in his white Spandex pants with suspenders, no shirt and a raccoon tail sticking out of the back of his pants. His hair was flying wildly around his face, while his entourage escorted him up to the stage. As Ted passed by me, he grabbed me by the wrist and said, "Come on baby, you're coming with me." I was mortified! He had a vice grip on my wrist and everyone on earth was watching, so I went along with him up to the stage. He walked me up even with the drum riser and pointed at his tour manager. Then he pointed at me and then down at my feet. In other words, he was telling the tour manager where I could stand. I was so close to the band that sometimes I was in the edge of the spotlights!

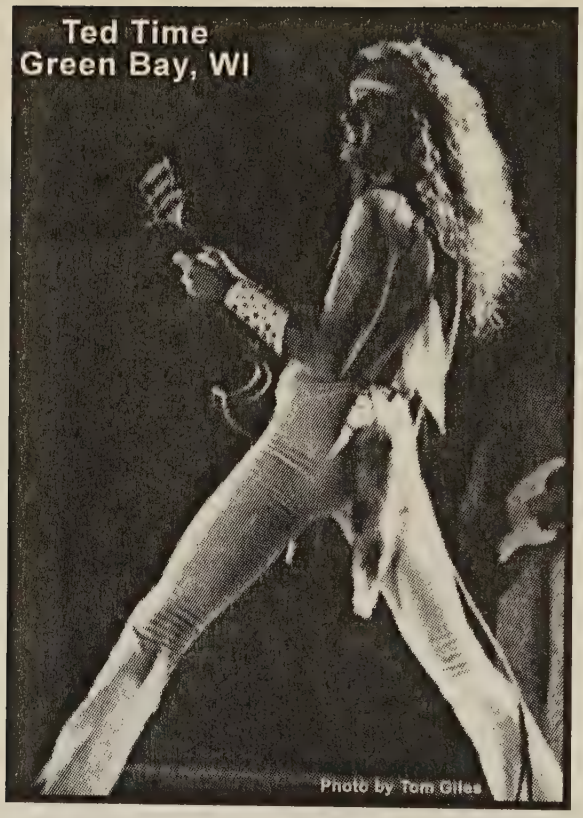
Then the lights went down, and 30,000 people began to scream. The adrenaline rush from their reaction made the hair on my arms stand straight up and I could see why people get addicted to performing. Then the lights came up and Ted launched into "Cat Scratch Fever." The crowd just ate him up alive. At one point during the show, Ted stopped and walked up to the edge of the stage and screamed at someone, "If you squirt me again with that squirt gun I'm going to piss in your face." 'Nuff said.

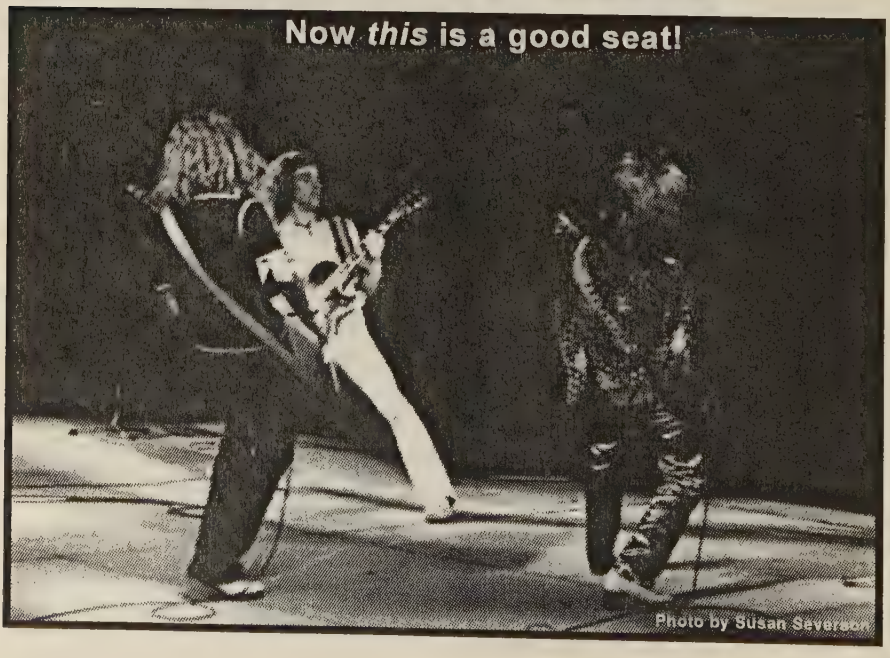
Tom threw me his camera and I snapped a couple of shots while I was standing there and you can see how close I was to the band. They might as well have handed me a tambourine or something! This was one of the most exciting things I've ever done, and one of the loudest. Ted's stage volume has a life of its own, believe me.

After the show, Ted posed for pictures and fielded questions from other journalists. While he was taking pictures, Tom suggested I get in on one, so I asked Ted if he wanted to go for Volume Two of the picture we had taken back in December. He invited me to sit on his lap in a chaise lounge and we got the perfect pose. Then he looked around and asked me where my boyfriend was. John happened to be outside the tent talking to some of the members of Cheap Trick. When Ted saw where he was, he planted a big long wet one right on my lips. When he had finished kissing me, he was the only one in the tent who wasn't blushing, but then I have a feeling that making Ted Nugent blush would take much more than a simple kiss.

"Hey, baby..." Grand Slam Jam, Milwaukee, WI June, 1978

Photo by Tom Giles


Ted Time
Green Bay, WI
Photo by Tom Giles


Now *this* is a good seat!
Photo by Susan Severeon

Chapter 14

Live Wire

Over the fourth of July weekend I went to Alpine Valley to see Alice Cooper, Eddie Money and Blondie. Michael and I got there early because we were supposed to be able to join in on a press conference with Alice Cooper. It was raining on and off all day and Alpine Valley, which is an outdoor music theater, turns into a mud slide in the rain. Rumor had it that Alice didn't want to partake in any press conference, so it got blown off. The bands were good, but having to wade through the mud took some of the fun out of it. Blondie and Eddie Money were both fresh and energetic, but Alice was the most fun to watch. Who wouldn't enjoy seeing someone chop off dolls heads while singing "No More Mr. Nice Guy!"

Barry called from Texas during the first week of July. They weren't going to be in our area until August! I certainly didn't think it would be eight months before we saw each other again. He called again about a week later and I wasn't in. Then I got a postcard from him which started out, Hello from Portland. He said they were due to be in Milwaukee on August 2nd, but had to cancel because the road crew can't get there from Rapid City, Iowa in one day. So they hoped that they would be doing a festival in Chicago with Ted Nugent and Aerosmith, although he didn't have a date on it yet.

They had just driven up to Oregon from Los Angeles, which he thought was a beautiful drive. "America is such a tremendous place for scenery, it blows me away!" They were getting a few days off in Oregon, and then had to drive back down to San Francisco, and then back up to Vancouver, Canada.

Barry quipped, "Good organization, heh?"

No one works harder than a roadie. Most people don't realize all the work that goes into a concert. All the long drives, early morning tear-downs and the constant stress of keeping up with the schedule. I don't think many people believe that Barry and I only had a platonic relationship, but we were never in the same place long enough to have anything but!

If I got to the venue early enough, Barry and I could visit until showtime. Then as soon as the concert was over, Barry would have to help tear it all down, jump into the truck and take off for the next city. Most of the time we were lucky if we got to say a decent good-bye!

I finished off July by going to see the British Lions and Cheap Trick at Alpine Valley. I sat in on an interview with the British Lions. A couple of the band members were originally from Mott the Hoople. Cheap Trick was doing very well, they were on tour to promote their latest album Heaven Tonight, and it was always a treat to see them perform live. No matter where they were playing, they always put all their energy into the best shows possible. It doesn't hurt that they also wrote infectious rock tunes that made you want to sing along!

We got a postcard at the Chronicle from Pat McDonald and his girlfriend Barbara Kooyman. They were good friends of Michael's and had played around Madison for years. They finally made it after they moved to Austin, Texas and changed their name to Timbuk 3. They eventually enjoyed a major hit with their song, "The Future's So Bright (I Gotta Wear Shades)." Barry called again from Montana, this time with a date! AC/DC was going

to open for Aerosmith at Alpine Valley on August 3rd. Almost an entire year from the day I met them. He called the day before from Minneapolis and told me to come down to Alpine Valley as early as possible. He would be there waiting for me.

The next day John, his sister Mary Ann and I took off for Alpine Valley. Mary Ann was a huge fan of Aerosmith's, and I got an extra ticket so we could treat her. We arrived in the late afternoon and I spotted Barry up by the soundboard. It was great to see him again. He was looking fit and freckled from the summer sun. The band brought along extra roadies, so Barry's duties were becoming more specialized. Now he was in charge of Phil's drum gear and still had to help out with Angus when it was demanded of him. The only time I can remember him ever complaining was to say that Angus would wake him up in the middle of the night to make tea. Barry didn't appreciate that.

We hung around with Barry and the new roadies backstage, while we all got a kick out of the huge production Aerosmith had traveling with them. Aerosmith was becoming rock royalty of American bands. This opening slot was a definite cushy place to be for AC/DC. They couldn't have asked for a better summer tour to open for.

While we were all standing around talking I couldn't help myself, and using the best Cockney accent I could mimmick, I asked the group what time it was. Well, you could have heard a pin drop. Making fun of their accents was not at all humorous to them. I immediately apologized and explained how much I loved listening to their accents, and I just couldn't resist giving it a try myself.

AC/DC hit the stage that night and played a blazing set. I believe they actually gave Aerosmith a good run for their money. They seemed a lot more polished than they did eight months earlier in Milwaukee. You could see by their new shorter haircuts and relentless show, that they were being molded into a slick but formidable rock machine.

I know the pressure to become headliners in their own right was upon them. Barry confidentially told me that they had to call a psychiatrist to come in and talk to Phil. He was having a hard time with the strain of constant touring. Several years later he would leave the band because of a substance abuse problem. I decided to hang out with them in their dressing room after the show, virtually missing Aerosmith's set. Though Mary Ann didn't. She snagged herself a seat on one of the road cases right on the side of the stage. What a view of the band. She was definitely in heaven!

Meanwhile, I was backstage watching Angus put his guitars away. We were all joking about how big the band was becoming, I asked him when they were going to get themselves some personalized guitar picks. He gave me a dirty look and said, "You Americans are such fucking pussies, why would we spend good money by putting our names on something we just use up and then throw away!" Then he threw one of his picks at me! Mind you, this statement came from the same man who now has his own likeness embroidered on AC/DC socks!

After Aerosmith was done, we gathered AC/DC together to get some cover shots for the paper. Bon was really looking great! His hair looked darker

and had been styled, and he was really looking better than I had ever seen him. Tom got his shots and naturally told me to jump in with them for a couple more pictures. This was the only time I had my picture taken with the whole band. I got in front of the boys, and Angus put his arm around me. The picture came out very well, as you can see. But the best pose was taken a couple of seconds later when Tom said he had gotten the perfect shot. Bon walked over to me and put his head down on my shoulder, looked up and did one of his infamous screams. Tom snapped another and ended up with the best picture of all.

Next we went to gather up Aerosmith for a cover picture, but were greeted with the Columbia record reps telling us that they had flatly refused to pose for us! When I heard that, I demanded to talk to the band personally. With a *Chronicle* in hand, I walked up to Steve Tyler and Joe Perry and showed them the cover with Ted holding a rose between his teeth. Then I asked them ever so nicely if they wouldn't mind giving us a cover shot for the next issue. They mumbled a couple of things between each other, then told me if it was good enough for Ted, it was good enough for them. The record rep's jaws hit the floor. When they all came out of their dressing room to take the picture, they insisted that the keyboard player who played along with the band off-stage be included. This was their way of being defiant, because he never appeared in any other Aerosmith pictures. Tom took the shots, but we never used them.

At the end of the evening, we were all saying good-bye when Bon walked

past us down the hallway to leave. I remember watching him and thinking he was being awfully quiet that night. He hadn't really pulled any of his many tricks to make us laugh. I wondered if there was something bothering him. Just then, he turned around and walked all the way back down the hall towards me. He walked up, grabbed me and kissed me on the cheek and said it was good seeing me again. Then he was gone.

Two weeks later Barry called me from New York. When I picked up the phone, this strange voice with a very midwestern twang said, "Hey man, how's it going?" Then Barry burst out laughing and exclaimed that it took him two weeks to get that accent down! He was very proud of the fact that he too could mimic my accent when he wanted to. I was very impressed that he would even try.

On August 22nd John and I went to the Milwaukee Arena to see Van Halen open for Black Sabbath. Van Halen's debut album had already gone gold and they sold out the Long Beach Arena in California (which holds 9,200), in just three hours. It looked as though the Van Halen boys were finally skyrocketing to superstardom.

Their opening set was white hot and they had seemed to change so much since we had last seen them. I think their impending fame was really starting to sink into the band. Their album was soaring and they were gathering rave reviews wherever they went. After their set, John and I spent the rest of the evening backstage with the band. Alex was as crazy as usual, but this time he

didn't carry me around hanging over his shoulder. Since John was with me I appreciated Alex's restraint.

We had a nice long talk with David in one of the dressing rooms while Black Sabbath was performing. Some people think of David as a loudmouth, but I have always thought he was a very intelligent, articulate person. We always seemed to be able to have a good conversation. I think Van Halen is still an incredible band, but I miss David's personality in it.

At the end of the evening, David outfitted us with Van Halen t-shirts and we said good-bye. Van Halen, much like AC/DC, would be more popular each time I saw them, until both bands eventually hit legendary status. I count myself one of the lucky ones to have been there from way back in the beginning. Once again I had missed the headlining act so I could hang out with the opening band. I missed Aerosmith to be with AC/DC, and Black Sabbath to be with Van Halen. It was a tough call, but sometimes sacrifices have to be made!

The boys and me backstage at Alpine Valley, East Troy, WI August 3, 1978-just seconds before my favorite picture was taken. (see cover)

Photo by Tom Giles

At the beginning of September I got a postcard from Barry from, of all places, Snoqualmie Falls, Washington. (It must have been a rest stop for the road crew!) He said that they just did their first gig with Ted Nugent in Seattle. "Nugent can be very arrogant but he can back it up, he puts on a really good show." Now that's an astute observation!

They were set to do another open air festival in San Francisco with Ted on the following Sunday. Then they were booked to do a show in Milwaukee with U.F.O., so he was looking forward to seeing me soon. "Only another six weeks left before we get back to England!" Someone was sounding a little homesick.

On September 12th I took my sister Kathy with me down to the Riverside Theatre in Milwaukee to see AC/DC. Barry was looking great and it was nice to see him again so soon. We spent the late afternoon and early evening visiting. I was really looking forward to seeing the band perform in a small venue again. I've always liked seeing them on a small stage more than in a stadium-of course I liked being able to stand closer to the band.

Kathy and I worked out a place for ourselves on stage right behind some road cases at the Riverside, and it was about as close as we could get without getting in their way. They came out and ripped it up in proper AC/DC style; the crowd was going wild for them. There were many amazed faces staring back from the audience.

When Angus got on Bon's shoulders and went out into the crowd they even made it up into the balcony of the theater. After a while we could hear Angus's lead guitar but we couldn't see them anymore. Angus was wailing away,

but I couldn't spot him anywhere. I noticed some of the audience looking around too. Just as I was thinking, where the hell is he? I felt this soft tap on my right elbow. My sister was on my left, so I turned around and there was Angus crouched down behind me jamming away! When I turned and looked at him he motioned for me to scoot over to the left and as I did, he rushed back out onstage. The roar from the crowd was thunderous (or maybe it was Angus's guitar). I really don't think the audience knew what hit them; when U.F.O. came out they seemed dull in comparison. They didn't get half the enthusiasm from the crowd that AC/DC did.

After they came off stage, Kathy and I spent the rest of the evening laughing with the band. Except we did peek out at U.F.O. occasionally; you guessed it, I missed the headlining act again! But it was the right decision; that night with AC/DC was hilarious.

Bon was in rare form, you could hear him laughing and screaming even over U.F.O.'s set. When one of the band members said Bon was pissed up again, I thought they would cry from laughing when I said, "Oh no, who's he mad at?" Angus had to explain to me that pissed up meant drunk. One more Australian/English phrase I had to learn.

While Angus, Kathy and I were sitting in one of the small dressing rooms talking, we could hear Bon laughing down the hall. Pretty soon the laughter kept getting closer until we heard a knock on the door. It was Bon. He came waltzing in with a tray in one hand and a huge smile on his face. Then he walked over to my sister, bent down and shoved the tray under her nose

and said, "Would you like an hors d'oeuvre ma'am?" By now he was laughing hysterically and when we looked at what was on the tray we could see why. Bon had collected up about a dozen small cups of horseradish and apparently someone had cut themselves, so Bon had them squeeze a drop of blood into each cup. I'm sure he was certain that this would horrify my sister and send her screaming out of the room, but he picked the wrong chick. My sister would eventually become a sergeant in the army, she has always had a strong constitution and was way past being grossed out by a few drops of blood. She just looked up at Bon and said, "No thanks. Besides, it's coagulating! You need a transfusion." This sent Bon into a laughing frenzy and he went reeling out of the room. I do believe it was the last we saw of him that night. Saying good-bye was hard because I knew it would be a while before I would see them all again. Our nights together always went by too fast.

Later that week I went to see Eddie Money and Cheap Trick at the Coliseum in Madison. A week after that John and his band Punch opened for Cheap Trick at a college in Naperville, Illinois. Cheap Trick was really taking off too, and they were playing for a sold-out audience of 5,000.

When Punch got ready to go on, I was standing at the side of the stage as the lights went down. Rick Nielson asked their tour manager, Kirk Dyer, to go out on stage and announce them. Kirk is a very big man with a low booming voice, and he sounds so impressive when he announces someone.

We all really laughed when he walked up to the microphone and said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome, just off the Rolling Stones

tour...Punch!" The lights came up and you could see the band looking at each other mouthing, 'Rolling Stones' tour?' They did a good job and really received a great reaction from the crowd.

Some of Cheap Trick stood on the side of the stage and watched their set. John is a very visual guitar player, and he often plays his guitar from behind his head, among other places. It is safe to say that he was influenced by Jimi Hendrix a great deal!

We were really flattered during Cheap Trick's set, when Robin Zander looked down at us and acted as if he was going to play his guitar behind his head. He threw his guitar up, then laughed and shook his head no and went back to playing. That concert was a great opportunity for Punch, and was an awful lot of fun to see.

The next day Barry called from West Virginia, the tour was going really well, but I think Barry was starting to get worn out. They had been in the States for three months and had criss crossed the country twice already. He sent a postcard in October from London, and said he didn't call before he left the States because the last couple of weeks he has spent in virtual silence, his dreaded throat illness had struck again. He hoped I had a great birthday and said he was really glad to get out of the States and get home to some sanity. They had two days off and then were off to Sweden.

The next time I would see the band would be on the television show "Midnight Special." I got a postcard from Barry at the beginning of November, this time from Scotland.

He wrote that there were only fourteen more gigs left before the end of the year and he'd be looking forward to a break. The European and U.K. tours had both sold-out. They released a live album, If You Want Blood, You've Got It, which hit the charts at number ten. Barry said it looked like they finally made it, but things were out of proportion, "We've got sixteen crew and two trailers this time. Slightly different from the U.S. tour."

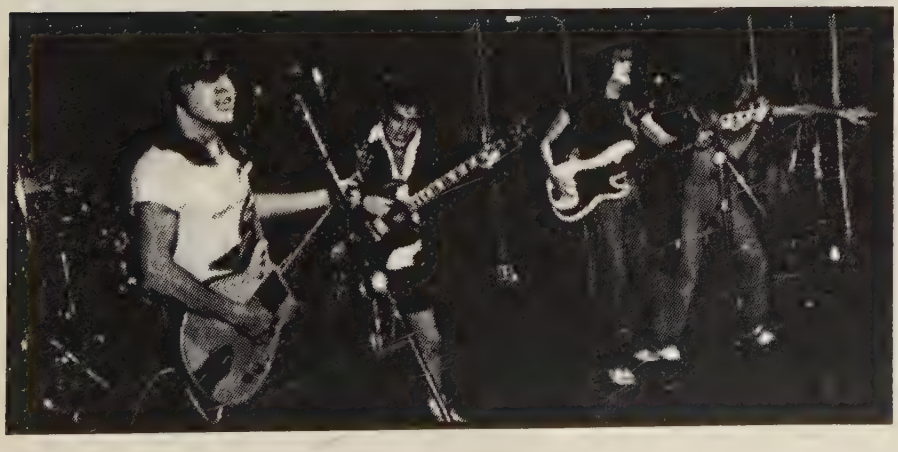
The next time I heard from him was a letter dated November 22nd, 1978. It was written on Albany Hotel stationary from Glascow, and he put his return address as Taylor's Lane Buckden Cambs England. He started out writing, "Home at last!" He had been home for five days and had just gotten used to the fact that he didn't have to run his life by referring to an itinerary. Although he had a sneaky feeling that he wouldn't want to stand still for too long. Their European tour went really well. Luckily they had a very late summer, so the weather was really mild. They didn't run into any snow anywhere, which surprised everyone. *All the dates sold out and the audiences were pretty wild; "Comparable to Texans! England was equally as good, even the press was more receptive to us this time, still reticent to give good reviews but no slaggings anyway. The new album went straight into the charts at number thirteen and it's still going up, not a bad way to end the year. I think the boys went back to Australia pretty pleased with the years work. Our good-byes were pretty weird, we'd all been through quite a lot together this year, at some points it looked as though it would never end, condemned to gig forever! We had a big stage show for the U.K. and Europe and it looks like we'll be*

taking it across the Atlantic next year, so hopefully you'll get to see it. That was quite a coincidence. I just this minute got a phone call from the P.A. company that we use over here. They want me to do some gigs for them next week. I shall probably do it as they are with an English punk band called X-Ray Specs. They are dreadful but the lead vocalist is quite a character, a girl who calls herself Patty Styrene, really!"

Next year they were to start work in Australia and then Japan, so he was planning on coming to the States around Christmas time to visit. He met some really great people on his last trip over here, and he wanted to visit them all but it would probably take him six months because they all lived in different places! Barry never made it over here for Christmas, but he did call from England just after the new year.

He also sent over a signed postcard for my niece Tracy. "It's hardly a glamorous shot, makes them look rather like convicts!" Now Tracy is the only person I know that has an autograph from the entire band, including Bon Scott! I didn't get any autographs, but Barry enclosed an *If You Want Blood, You've Got It* t-shirt for me. I've since worn out the t-shirt, but Tracy still has her autographed postcard.

Publicity Photo of AC/DC and my only photo of Barry
(shoulder and arm far right)



Angus Young

(from the *Powerage* press kit)

Chapter 15

Cheap Trick

I Want You To Want Me

Near the end of 1978, the Chronicle went through a period of transition. Corkey, our fearless publisher, wanted out of the newspaper business, so he sold the paper to Michael and Tom, and they took in some outside financial partners. Although I had been made to believe that I owned a small percentage of the company for all my hard work in the beginning of the newspaper, I never had an agreement in writing with Corkey. So I was very disappointed in the fact that Michael and Tom never gave me the opportunity to invest in the paper when they bought it from Corkey. I knew I was the only woman in an all boys club, but I thought that they should have at least offered me a chance to invest in it. One of their investors ended up with my job title and duties, and I was demoted and offered no pay. Don't you love show business? Of course I was devastated and left to find work elsewhere. I spent the remaining months of the year working temp jobs, handing out resumes and trying to stay in the music business.

Ironically, after Michael and Tom took the paper over they ran into problems. I never knew the details, but within the first year they folded. The whole experience left such a bad impression on me, that it would be eleven years before I would again get involved with another music paper.

During my job search, John mentioned to his manager, Ken Adamany, that I was looking for a job. The first week of February 1979, Ken called and asked

Cheap Trick postcard

me to come downtown to his office. Cheap Trick was really taking off and they didn't have anyone to handle their fan mail. Ken offered me a job handling fan correspondence, plus he wanted me to organize their fan mail from Japan. Then he took me into a room with boxes stacked up against the wall that went all the way to the ceiling. It was their Japanese fan mail! I definitely had my work cut out for me.

I started immediately, working evenings until they set up an office space for me. Ken and his girlfriend JoAnne shared an office with a divider between their desks, and a large mirror across from them, I assumed so they could look at each other! Which was very sweet, actually.

The first couple of weeks I worked there, I worked at JoAnne's desk at night along with Ken. He worked on the band at all hours. Their offices were in the basement level of a building on University Avenue in Madison. The walls were covered with Cheap Trick posters, and other rock and roll memorabilia. I was in the heart of what was happening with Cheap Trick in the late seventies, and I was thrilled to be working there.

Cheap Trick's mailing list had approximately ten thousand fans on it and this was B.C...before computers. I had a typewriter, sheets of names and a couple of boxes of index cards to cross reference all the names on the mailing label sheets. As I got used to my job duties, I started answering back to the fans when they wrote in and asked questions. It came easily for me and the fans responded with a lot of enthusiasm. Can you ever remember sending a letter to your

favorite group's fan club and getting a personal reply? Nope, me neither. As the fans started responding to my correspondence with them, Ken let me make up slips with my name on them to write short answers back. The slips had a carbon copy which I tore off and left in Ken's mail box, so he could monitor what I was writing. Ken always had an iron-fisted grip on everything that went down in the office.

Another thing that was fascinating about my job was that my office was connected to Jeff Messenger's office. Jeff Messenger is Ken's cousin, and was Cheap Trick's business manager. He spent hours on the phone taking care of the logistics of the band, especially while they were on tour. I love the music business and actually found it very interesting to listen to Jeff work out customs problems when the band traveled up into Canada, or when he would order equipment for one of the band members.

Rick Nielson, who is an avid guitar collector, would sometimes buy a guitar and have it shipped to the office. One day when I had John meet me after work, we got to open up a guitar case and gaze at a 1950's mint green Fender Stratocaster. It was in perfect condition and I can just imagine how much that guitar is worth today!

The fringe benefits were also great, that is if you were a Cheap Trick fan. Ken gave me a Cheap Trick satin baseball jacket, and one day when one of the road crew came into Ken's office while I was filing something, he asked Ken for panties. Ken opened up one of his drawers and pulled out a box of bikini underwear. As he handed the roadie a bunch I looked over and said, "Hey,

what about me?" So Ken threw me a pair. They are black with the Cheap Trick logo stamped on the front. Very cute. I have saved them to wear for special occasions, such as a Cheap Trick concert. You never know when you might get the chance to flash Robin Zander!

I also had a huge stash of guitar picks and stickers in my desk to send out to the fans. I have never been a hoarder and now only have one of each in my rock collection. I did acquire a cute little Cheap Trick tank top which looks more like underwear than a shirt. Plus, I had numerous Cheap Trick t-shirts, some from certain events, which naturally by now are all worn out.

I have Cheap Trick glossies, stationery, envelopes and postcards from several of their albums, membership forms, itinerary cards, and fan club letters. I even have my Dream Police membership card! And Ken, if you're reading this, I only have one of each, so don't get excited.

The fans would send me funny things in the mail too, not to mention the nude photos they would send to Robin and Tom! There was a cartoonist that would send pencil drawings of cartoon figures incorporating the words Cheap Trick. I wrote him back and encouraged him to pursue a career in art.

A fan from London sent me a postcard with a picture of her Majesty on the front dressed like Rick Nielson. She apparently cut out one of Rick's sweaters and guitars and glued them over the royal Mum. She wrote to thank me for sending her the address to Alpine Valley in East Troy, WI and also wished Robin Zander well because she had heard that he was sick with the chicken pox.

Of course the best perk of the job was answering the phone when one of the band members would call, which was often. And especially when one or all of the members of Cheap Trick would come into the office in person. I truly had a very cool job.

I was very pleased with my job until Ken brought in a friend, Jill Page, to be the president of the fan club. I knew he wouldn't ask me to be the president, but I was hoping they would consult me on some of the decision making. After all, I was the one who opened all the fan mail from around the world, (excluding Japan), and answered questions when I could, and processed their fan club orders. It would suffice to say I felt close to the situation.

When I started my job, hundreds of kids had already sent in their six dollar membership fee and had received nothing for it. So when Jill came into the picture, she composed a letter to the fans explaining all the goodies they would receive if they joined. After she got boxes of these letters printed up and stacked them next to my desk, I finally got to read one. The letter made it sound like you had to rejoin the fan club if you wanted to receive anything. I sent out all these letters and told Ken that a great confusion would follow.

As kids who had already sent in their money to become members began sending in another six dollars to rejoin the fan club, Ken started listening to what I had to say. I immediately composed a note: Dear Fan Service Members, Contrary to a previous invitation to join our Cheap Trick International Fan Service, your fan club kits are being processed at this moment. For those of you

who have sent in more money, I am sending you a refund. Unless you would like to have two memberships in your name, your original remittance is adequate. Thank you for your patience and understanding. After I mailed these notes out, all the confusion ended. Now if Jill had only asked me to proofread that original letter, it would have saved them a lot of postage and me a hell of a lot of work!

Eventually I got my fan mail under control, but that big wall of Japanese mail kept glaring at me. Well maybe it was Ken that kept glaring at me. Anyway, I just dreaded having to process all that mail. When I opened my first box and tried to type up an index card and mailing label for each letter, my heart just sank. The letters were beautiful, all written in English, many with drawings along the sides of each page. What was so frustrating was that each name and address was about five to seven lines long. Not only were they lengthy, but they were all foreign looking (duh) names and addresses. No abbreviations or anything recognizable that would have made it more bearable.

Whenever I am faced with an overwhelming job, the first thing I try to do is figure out an easier way to get it done. Some people would call this very smart, some would call it lazy. I promptly asked for a meeting with Ken, which I did way too often, I'm sure. I was very young and had just spent the last couple of years interviewing rock stars for a living. I was a bit of a prima donna. Okay, I was a major prima donna.

I went to Ken and explained to him the difficulty of going through and processing all those Japanese names.

Then I came up with a great idea, why not start a Japanese fan club exclusively for the Japanese fans. That way they would have a Japanese address to write to, and of course Japanese people would open and process all the mail. Genius, right?

Apparently Ken thought so because he liked the idea and set off to look into starting a Japanese fan club/merchandise company. I also gave him the idea to approach the Wheaties cereal company about putting Rick on the cover of their cereal boxes. Remember when they had famous athletes on the cover of their boxes? Well I thought that with the workout Rick put into his performances, he would be a perfect candidate to sponsor Wheaties cereal. Kind of an "Eat your Wheaties and grow up to become a rock star kind of thing." Ken called General Mills, or whoever it was that made Wheaties cereal and pitched them the idea. Unfortunately they didn't think it was all that great at the time. I was flattered that Ken liked the idea enough to approach them with it.

I actually got along with Ken very well and wasn't afraid to bring up a complaint or an idea for the band. One time after a particularly whiney complaint session, Ken came through my office and turned around and sang, "Didn't I, didn't I, didn't I hear you cryin', cryin', cryin'.... to the melody of "I Want You To Want Me," of course." He also set up a Japanese fan club/merchandise company, and when the contracts came in, he brought them into my office and signed them on my desk. I just wish he would have given me a small commission

for that idea, because I'm sure that turned out to be one of the most lucrative things Ken and Cheap Trick ever did.

I wasn't spared from all that mail though. Ken wanted me to open each and every letter and take out the gifts that were enclosed. I had four large envelopes, each with a band member's name on it and as I opened the letters, I put the gifts in the appropriate envelope. I felt badly that the fan who sent the gift would never be acknowledged for it, but I was more than happy that I didn't have to personally answer all that mail!

The most memorable gift was a sterling silver bullet on a silver chain with Tom's name engraved on it. Years later, when I had my own paper Rock Central, I had the opportunity to interview Tom Petersson again. We talked a lot about the old days and I asked him if he ever received that necklace. He said he never saw it and accused me of stealing it! As we were laughing I told him that I bet Hal Hamer (a longtime office employee) had taken it, and Tom said, "That's right, I remember seeing him wear it!"

The band was doing very well while I was working there, but none of their albums had ever sold that big, until Cheap Trick At Budokan. That album was only supposed to be released in Japan, but somehow copies of it got over to the States and the fans went crazy for it. They started pressing copies over here and it was to be their first platinum album. All of a sudden Cheap Trick was huge. You would think all this success would have made everyone happy, but it didn't seem to be that way for Tom.

He had started dating a model by the name of Dagmar, who I believe was from Germany. Before long she had an apartment in Los Angeles and Tom was supporting her. Ah...a dream come true.

I remember listening to Jeff on the phone transferring money from Tom's account into her bank account. Tom seemed to be getting more and more uncooperative. The band sometimes would come into the office to have a meeting and they would all go upstairs to a conference room armed with a cooler full of refreshments. One time Tom didn't show up, but he sent his father in his place. I could see things weren't going to go well for Tom and eventually he left the band. For many years he was replaced by bassist Jon Brandt.

In the early eighties while I was living in New York, I happened to catch Tom and Dagmar on an afternoon music show promoting the only solo album he ever released. During the interview Tom seemed to be in a daze and Dagmar answered all the questions for him. I think somebody forgot to tell her she was a model, not a musician! After being away from the band for over ten years, I was very happy to see Tom rejoin Cheap Trick. I think his bass sound and playing style added a lot to Cheap Trick's appeal.

I should have stayed working for Cheap Trick International, but Ken hired a musician to handle the merchandise end of it, and I helped train him only to find out he was making more money than I was. My pride was so hurt, I quit. Ken tried to talk me out of it and I wouldn't listen to him. Obviously, neither did Tom Petersson! I was too young to realize that you shouldn't let your pride get in the way of a good thing. Working for Cheap Trick was a good thing.

Chapter 16

High Voltage

While Barry was enjoying some time off at home, he sent a card saying he was getting a little bored and took a job for a couple of weeks with the Ian Gillan band, Deep Purples ex-vocalist. He wrote, *"They are very noisy but not bad really, standard British rock music. Cheap Trick are touring over here at the moment, I hope to go and see them in the next couple of days. We finally leave for Japan in about ten days. I shall be glad to get back to work and see the guys again, this is about the longest period that we've been off the road since I started working with them. I spoke to Ian just now and he said that we are booked to play the Los Angeles Coliseum with Aerosmith at the start of April so it looks like we'll be traveling straight from Japan to the States so I might get to see you soon, it would be nice. Did you know that Ian is now a father, he's got a beautiful daughter named Emma, a lovely child."*

A few weeks later I got a postcard from Barry from Japan, he said that they arrived there to be met with the news that the band wasn't coming! So they had an unexpected holiday. They thought they would reschedule the tour for May; it had something to do with visa problems. Apart from that hassle, he thought Japan was thrilling, the people so polite and friendly. He hoped to see me in April. I got another letter from Barry dated March 18th, 1979. He had just gotten home and found a letter from me waiting for him. He thought my new job sounded pretty interesting and imagined: *"That it's pretty good fun working for*

Cheap Trick's people. We weren't due to play with them in Japan, they arrived the day we left I believe, it's a pity I would have liked to have seen the guys again. The band is now here in England and intend to record the album here finally. God knows what they've been doing these past five months. They are pretty pissed off at missing out on the Japanese tour. You can imagine how shocked we were to get off the plane in Tokyo to be told that the band aren't coming! I suppose it does have quite a funny side to it really. At least it gave me an unexpected holiday and a chance to explore a bit more. We went to stay with Ian's wife's family who live in a tiny fishing village about two hundred miles south of Tokyo, it was tremendous. Japan was definitely one of the most enjoyable places that I have visited. The people are incredibly polite and friendly and the country is so interesting, I'll bring you some photos when I come.

Although when we shall finally get back to the States I'm not sure. I must admit that I'm getting a little disillusioned at the moment, it's five months since we last did a live show and it's probably going to be at least another six weeks before anything starts to happen. Between you and I the band seems to be having more than a few managerial problems and they've also been pressured into having another producer, the record company obviously doesn't approve of the Australian sound, but the boys aren't really too keen on using anyone else so things are a little strained at the moment.

I'm seriously thinking of leaving and going elsewhere. Two of my closest friends are now living in Los Angeles and I am thinking of going there too. I don't particularly like Los Angeles but it could be a bit different living there as opposed to just gigging there.

It's a bit of a problem for foreigners to settle in the States but one can only try. I definitely think that the States have a lot more appeal to me than England, I'm afraid that the mother country is a bit of a lame duck at the moment. We changed our clocks to British Summer time today and we've experienced the worst blizzards ever this weekend! Some summer!"

It's funny Barry mentioned that the band was having problems with their management because I had just sent them a letter telling them about my job with Cheap Trick and that I wanted to correspond with AC/DC's fan club. I got a letter from Coral Browning dated March 27th, 1979. She wrote: Dear Sue, Thank you very much for your letter. Sounds like you are keeping busy with the Cheap Trick fan club. I have passed your letter onto our official fan club president in England, her name is Sandra Munday. She will send you an application form in due course. (She didn't.) AC/DC are in London recording and will be there until the end of April. The U.S. tour will start in May. They won't be doing the California Music Festival as they have to finish the new album. I will pass on your regards to the band. Thanks for writing, please note our new address and phone number. Which was now 250 West 57th St. in New York City. (Six years later I would be in New York working for a publicity firm just a few doors away from the Browning's new address.) That would be the last time I would hear from them. Eventually AC/DC did get new management.

Barry took advantage of his time and came over to visit his friends in L.A. He called me from there during the first and third weeks of April.

Finally on May 7th, Barry came to Madison the day before AC/DC played the Coliseum. John and I had him over for dinner and I made him a meatloaf. He had never heard of meatloaf before and thought the name was hilarious. He really enjoyed it though, and we had a wonderful visit. He also got to see pictures of my daughter Teal, and how big she was getting.

The next night we went to the Coliseum to see the band perform. They were more incredible than ever. The crowd went crazy for them and it was a kick to hear them play all the old favorites plus the new songs from Powerage. It just amazes me that they can still play some of the same songs that they played at the Stone Hearth the night I met them in 1977, and the crowds still go wild. Now that's real musical longevity.

After the show, John and I with our friends Katy and Hino, went over to the Sheraton Hotel where the band was staying and hung out in Phil Rudd's room. He was really excited about their new album and played us some songs off of it on a boombox. The new tunes were awesome! Then he told us all about the photo shoot for the album cover. They took pictures of the band on a deserted road at night supposedly hitchhiking. Then a car pulls up and they all get in the back seat. They had created some fog on the ground with red lights shining through it to make it look sinister. The cover of the album was going to be a picture of the devil driving the car while smiling at the band in the rear view mirror. Phil laughed about the kids who were watching the photo shoot and how

they pelted the band with stones from the side of the road. He was extremely excited about the new album and was certain this one was going to be the album that would put them over the top. They had decided that the title for it was going to be Highway To Hell.

Less than a year later Bon Scott would die right after Highway To Hell was released. I don't know if they ever released copies of the album with the original cover art, but the pictures on the back of the album are from that photo shoot. Possibly due to the record company's objections, the album cover ended up being an older publicity photo of the band with horns and a tail superimposed on Angus. I think it would be safe to say that this is where Angus being portrayed as a little devil started.

Barry called me the next day to say good-bye. They were on the road again. A week later on May 16th I went into work to find out the band's Cheap Trick At Budakon had officially gone platinum. They all came into the office and were in very high spirits!

Barry called again at the end of May from New York, he said their audiences just keep getting bigger and bigger. They came back our way on the 4th of July and played a huge outdoor show at the Winnebago County Fairgrounds in Rockford, Illinois with Cheap Trick, The Babys and Molly Hatchet. I was really looking forward to seeing both AC/DC and Cheap Trick: it would be the first time I would see them at the same concert, although they ended up playing a lot of dates together and apparently got along very well. In one of the official Cheap Trick fan club newsletters, there is a picture of Robin and Bun E. playing pool with Bon Scott while on tour together somewhere in Europe.

When John and I arrived at the speedway in Rockford, my passes were at the back gate, so we walked in and looked around for Barry. Each band had a trailer behind the stage and AC/DC's tour bus was parked in back behind the trailers. It was very hot and the crowd was enormous.

People backstage were still talking about the ridiculous accident that had taken place right before we got there. It seems some fool threw a lit M-80 up on the stage and someone got hit with it! They had to call an ambulance and everyone was still very shaken by it.

We hung around watching the bands party with each other and we really laughed when we saw Tom Petersson together with Bon Scott. Now there was a pair, believe me! Both of them were doing some very serious drinking. When it came time for Cheap Trick to go on stage, their tour manager Kirk Dyer, was having trouble coaxing Tom to the stage. He kept veering off in the other direction and Kirk kept calling him "baby" and "sweetheart." I'll bet he would rather have thrown Tom over his shoulder and just hauled him up on stage, but he patiently worked with him until he got him to cooperate.

Bun E. Carlos, Robin Zander and Bon Scott on tour in Europe

As AC/DC was in their trailer getting ready for their set I was really starting to wonder why we hadn't seen Barry yet. He wasn't coming in and out of the bus or trailer, he wasn't up on the stage getting ready, he wasn't ....oh my God. I looked at John and told him to follow me while I took off running for operations trailer.

I ran up inside and asked the guys in there to describe the person who was injured by the M-80 explosion. To my horror they started to describe Barry. They told me he had been taken to Rockford Memorial Hospital and there was no one with the band who could leave and attend to him. So we immediately jumped back into the car and sped off to the hospital.

This time I would miss AC/DC's set, but someone had to go take care of Barry. When we got to the hospital he was still being seen by the doctor and there were two young chicks hanging out in the waiting room. I guess they rode along in the ambulance with him. I wasn't sure if Barry even knew either of them, so I treated them as if they were his friends.

After about an hour Barry was led out into the waiting room to be taken back to the bus. His face was burned bright red from the explosion, he was high on whatever they shot him up with and he couldn't hear us at all. I found out later that Barry was underneath Phil's drum riser adjusting things when the M-80 flew up on stage, rolled across the floor, hit Barry in the chest and exploded right in his face. It was a horrible accident and a terrible thing for someone to do!

We brought Barry back to the tour bus and tucked him into his bed. I had made him some homemade chocolate chip cookies, so I left them with Phil to

give to Barry when he was feeling better. The band thanked me repeatedly for going to fetch him. They had to perform and there was no one else available. I was glad I was there to help Barry out.

Ironically, about a week or two later I opened a letter for Cheap Trick and enclosed was the newspaper clipping of the accident with a picture of Barry lying on the stage being attended to. A few days after the accident he called me from Iowa to let me know he was going to be all right. Although he was completely deaf in one ear, the doctors told him that hopefully his hearing would come back. Then he went on to thank me for coming to get him at the hospital and for the cookies. There he was, deaf in one ear and he's thanking me for the cookies. Is there no end to an Englishman's politeness? I guess not because a couple of days after his phone call I got a new AC/DC t-shirt in the mail and another phone call at the end of the month, this time from Indiana.

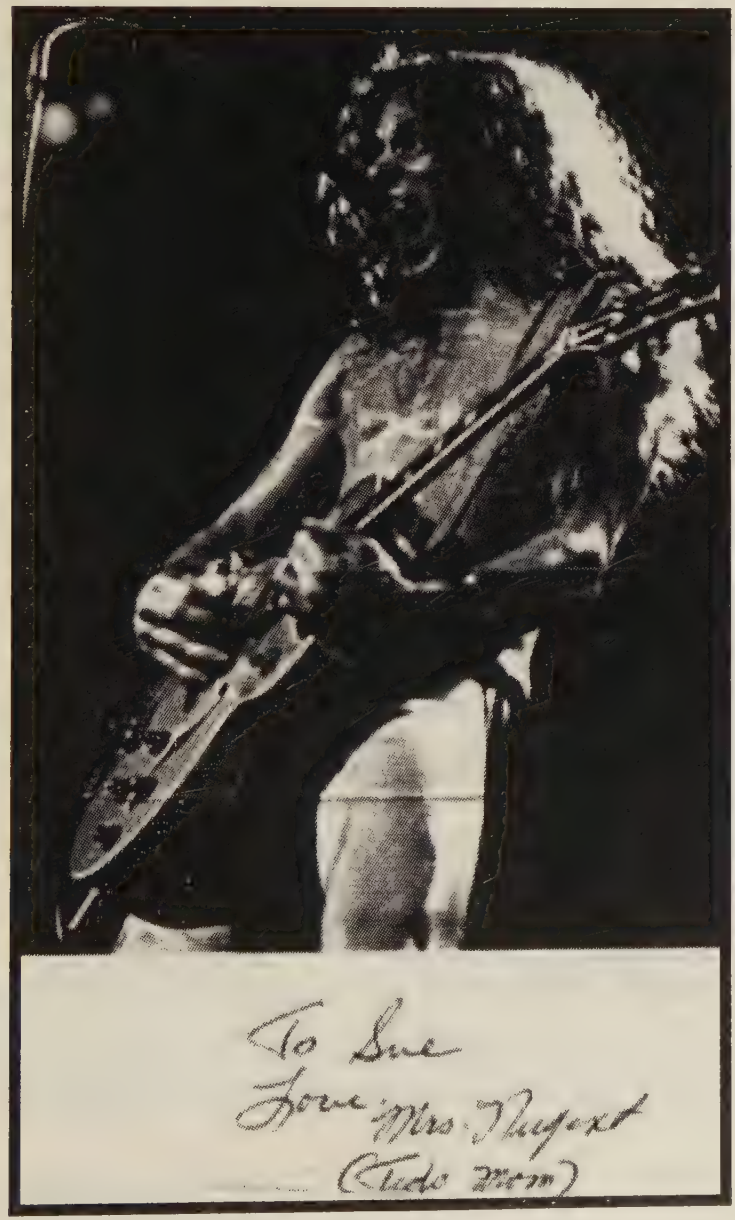
Barry called again from California in September and from Atlanta in October. On October 19th I went down to the Aragon Ballroom in Chicago to see AC/DC again. This time after the show, Barry told me he had something for me, and took me out to the bus. Inside he handed me a light blue and white stone necklace he bought at an Indian reservation in Arizona. It was a belated birthday gift and I was very surprised. I jumped up to thank him and kissed him on the lips. He stepped back a little and blushed. I guess you could say I was in no danger of molestation while on the AC/DC tour bus!

Once again it was a great treat to see the band play live. I didn't want to say good-bye this time and remember getting very teary-eyed during the drive back to Madison. It made me wonder if I was getting too attached to Barry. I had never cried before when we said good-bye. Now looking back on that night, I wonder if some part of me knew that I wouldn't see Barry for years, and it was the last time I would see Bon alive.

That night I also ran into Ted Nugent's mother. She was a big fan of AC/DC and thought all the guys were just great. She was writing a column for Circus Magazine, I believe, and a few weeks later I wrote her a letter. I mentioned to her that my own mother was very supportive of my involvement in the music business and often came out to see John perform; she loved to dance! Mom also had taken a lot of phone calls from Barry for me during the time I was living back at home after my divorce.

At the end of 1979 we sadly discovered that my mom was dying of cancer and just twenty days before her death I received this reply from Ma Nugent: Dear Sue, Sorry it has taken so long for me to answer your letter. Being Ted's Mom, working and being Ma Nugent is really keeping me busy. I love what I'm doing and being so proud of Ted helps a lot. You're so right, sharing with someone else helps what you're doing so much more fun. I'll never forget the night I posed with that rose in my teeth, still have a large copy of that picture. Thank you so much for writing and sending me the copy of the paper. (I sent her a copy of the last interview I did with Ted from the Grand Slam Jam in June of 1978.) Gave it to Ted 2 weeks ago. Keep in touch and keep rockin'. Love ya, Ma Nugent.

The second piece of stationery had a color picture of Ted on it playing his guitar and screaming into a microphone, underneath it she wrote: To Sue, Love, Mrs. Nugent (Ted's Mom).



Letter from Ted's Mom, she was quite a lady.

Chapter 17

Highway To Hell

Barry called two days after they left Rockford from Ohio to say good-bye before they left the country, then I got a letter from London dated October 31, 1979. *"It feels good to be home. Thankfully due to immigration hassles for the band, the television show that we were to do on the day we landed was cancelled, which surprisingly didn't upset anybody, not that we don't enjoy television shows! So I had the opportunity to get home to Buckden for half a day, it was well worth the effort. I wish you could see our little house, it has tremendous character, it's nothing spectacular to look at, but it feels alright, if you know what I mean.*

My holiday was pretty short-lived though and the next day I was back in London loading trucks and generally running around. Our first gig was to be in Newcastle for two nights. Newcastle is a northern mining town almost in Scotland, and it is arguably the heavy metal town in Great Britain, you have never seen so many phantom guitarists in one audience in your life, we were thinking of getting some cardboard copies of Angus's SG made, it would look great.

Anyway, there we are on Thursday just about ready for a really rare occurrence, an AC/DC soundcheck, when somebody shouted fire! Then the building filled up with smoke and we scampered with all the dignity we could muster! It was quite frightening, it just happened out of the blue. Luckily the firemen managed to contain it in the cloakroom and apart from being extremely black and smelly nothing was really damaged. They managed to get the place fairly well cleaned

up and the band played the next night, a fine way to start the tour! It also means we will have to go back and play the other date at the end of the tour, which is a bit of a drag, it is possibly the world's worst load-in!

Since then we have played two nights in both Glasgow and Manchester all of which were sold out and tomorrow we start four days in London which is all sold, the band seems to be getting quite popular all over just lately! I stayed overnight in Manchester last night and came down on the train today and I met this young kid who has a ticket to every gig in England, a dedicated fan no less!"

Unbelievably, seventeen years later I would meet a dedicated fan backstage at AC/DCs concert at the Bradley Center in Milwaukee, on March 5th, 1996. His name is Carl Allen and he is from England, and he follows the band around the world when they go out on tour. After visiting with the band that night, Carl and I sat down and had a nice chat about the first time he ever saw the band and how he traveled around England back in the late seventies seeing all of their concerts. He remembered Barry and had some good stories to tell. I don't know for a fact that he is the same kid that Barry ran into on that train back in October of 1979, but you never know!

I got a nice Christmas card from Barry dated November 19th and was signed from Passaw, West Germany. He writes: *"This may reach you a little prematurely, but I don't know how reliable the Deutsche Bundar Post is! We have just finished the load out in thick snow, the first this year, looks like*

winter is now here for real! Passaw is a small bavarian town on the German Austrian border, it's really picturesque. Lots of tiny cobbled streets and crooked houses. We are zig-zagging across Germany, they really know how to organize tours in this part of the world. At least we have a bus this time so that makes life a lot easier. And speaking of organization, we have fourteen shows in France which is a lot for that country and two of them have rain dates and yet the French promoter assures us that the shows are not open-air, leaky roof perhaps? The band has moved a little closer to Earth on this part of the tour, nobody is too concerned with rock and roll stars on this continent, so they have to be alright to the crews because there is no one else that they can talk to.

I have a sneaking suspicion that Angus could be getting hitched pretty soon, he seems pretty deeply involved with his Dutch girlfriend and he visited her parents a couple of weeks ago, without his horns!

Well I trust that you have a happy Christmas and joyful New Year. I hope that I shall see you fairly early in 1980. I just have to clear a few things up over here and then I'm off."

John and I were keeping very busy towards the end of 1979. Earlier in the year John had left Punch to form his own band, Masino. One thing led to another and he was approached by his former booking agent who was looking for a band to back up a singer he was representing. The singer Gregg Clemons, had an impending recording deal with Nemperor Records which was a branch of CBS Records, (now Sony). The president of the label was Nat Weiss, who had a

hand in bringing the Beatles over to America in 1964. Gregg came over and jammed with John and his band and decided he wanted them to record a demo with him for the record company. The demo was recorded at Shade Tree recording studios which was located in the Playboy Club in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. The record company liked the demo and Nat Weiss, along with Danny Keaton flew out to see the band showcase one afternoon at a club in downtown Lake Geneva.

The showcase went over well and Nat Weiss signed the band shortly thereafter. Gregg Clemons had made a name for himself as a singer in a local band called Clicker and he certainly had a lot of good songs. With the right management, Gregg could have been another Huey Lewis.

While John was busy rehearsing for the recording of the album, my mother was in the hospital dying of cancer. All at the same time, our dreams were coming true, and my worst nightmare was playing out in front of my eyes like a bad late night movie.

In the middle of January, Barry called from England and told me he was quitting the band. He had had enough of the road and wanted to come to the States to live permanently. It was very late when he called and he sounded so sad when he asked if he could come stay with me. I had to be honest and told him that John and I were living together, but he was more than welcome to come stay with us for as long as he needed. I don't think that was the answer he wanted to

hear and he declined my open invitation. He said he would probably go to Los Angeles and stay with his friends there. After all his calls and letters, Barry had never asked me for anything before and when he said it wouldn't be the best thing for him to come and stay with us, I felt I had let him down as a friend. But I had more serious things to worry about. My mother was dying and I was the only one in the family that had the time to deal with a lot of her affairs. While she went in and out of the hospital, I ran errands for her, cleaned her apartment, ran her antique and used furniture store and basically took care of all her business.

Then in the middle of February I got a postcard from Barry, this time from Los Angeles. He starts out by saying, *"Happy Valentines Day! Well I finally quit AC/DC, can't say that I'm sorry, took me long enough to work up to it. What I'm going to do now I'm not too sure about but I'm sure that something alright will turn up. I decided to come and spend some time with my friends here in L.A. for a while-it looks like I brought the rain with me, not a sunny day since I got here. I'd really like to hear from you, maybe I'll come and visit when I get sorted out."* During the same week I received Barry's postcard I was on my way up to the hospital to pick up my mother. She was going to come home for a few days, at least for as long as she felt up to it. As I was driving up to the hospital I switched on the radio and immediately found an AC/DC song.

Anytime I hear an AC/DC song it always raises my spirits, and at this point in my life I needed all the cheering up I could get.

So naturally I turned up the volume as loud as my measly 1974 Pontiac LeMans speakers could take, and rocked out. As the song ended, the DJ came on and announced that "That song was in tribute to the late Bon Scott, who was found dead in the backseat of a car in England last night."

I didn't want to believe what I had just heard. I burst into tears and had to pull the car off the road. As soon as I could drive, I found a telephone booth and jumped out to call John at home. I had to talk to him, and I wanted him to try to find out more news. I just couldn't believe that Bon was gone. Not now. Not when the band was just starting to gain the fame they had worked so hard for. Not when the new album Highway To Hell was climbing the charts. Bon was only thirty-three years old, and my heart just broke for the band and Bon's family. I cried all the way to the hospital, but tried to put on a happy face when I went in to pick up my mother.

Of course I had to tell her the news and I knew she could see how hard it had hit me. She asked me all about Bon and how he had died. For those of you that don't know what happened, Bon was left in the backseat of a car by a friend to sober up and the next morning was found dead. I believe the cause of death was due to choking. It seemed so unfair to me.

I know Bon's death devastated the band and for a while they even considered giving it up. I have since met fellow AC/DC fans who remember the news of Bon's death as being one of the great tragedies in their lives. I know it is one of mine. I think Bon Scott was one of the greatest rock and roll singers of our time, not to mention a brilliant and sometimes prophetic lyricist.

I consider myself more than just lucky to have known him at all. He was always so kind to me and never failed to make me laugh. He was a dynamic performer, and had a lot to do with molding AC/DC's style. I will forever miss him.

I brought my mother home for what turned out to be her last time. At twenty four years old, just six weeks after Bon's death, I would lose her too.

Publicity photo of AC/DC that was
used for the cover of Highway To Hell

Chapter 18

Back In Black

I received my last full-length letter from Barry mailed from Hollywood, CA dated May 5, 1980: *It was great to hear from you again. I am very sorry to hear of your mother's death, it must have come as quite a shock, it's a hard thing to deal with. I went back to England for a few days just a couple of weeks ago in a vain effort to resolve my visa problems, I think I'll just give up on it. It was good to get home to England for a few days but I am pretty settled here now and don't miss it too much.*

I went to see the guys in AC/DC. They are all well and fairly happy, considering. They have a new singer, another Englishman, he seems very pleasant, he comes from a city in the extreme north of England on the Scottish border called Newcastle and the people are renowned for their geniality and hospitality and he seems to fit the bill. He has a good voice and he can also write pretty good lyrics apparently. The band have been forced to become tax exiles so they have gone to the Bahamas to record their next album, I don't think they are too upset with the idea. I enjoyed seeing them again but I don't imagine ever working on the road again, that's definitely become a thing of my past!

Oh before I forget, did I tell you that Angus is now married?! He got married the day I left England. Malcolm's wife is expecting her baby any day now and Malcolm is quite looking forward to being a father!

Barry went on to talk about my mother and to let me know that he was a Christian and wanted to explain that to me someday.

As Barry had mentioned, the band immediately went into the studio and poured their grief into their monumental album Back In Black. Toward the end of the year, they went back on the road to promote it.

After their stop in L.A., I got a card from Barry and he said it was good to see the guys again: "I'm glad that Bon's death didn't affect their success. The new guy is a real sweetheart, I'm not sure that I like his style as much as Bon's but he's O.K."

On Sept. 11th 1980 , AC/DC made it back to Wisconsin, and I felt very strange going backstage as usual without seeing Barry. Ian, the tour manager was very accommodating and they all treated me as nicely as they always had before. When the band arrived, I was standing near the backstage entrance watching them as they were ushered in. Although the band was surrounded by their entourage, I could see Angus jumping up and down waving at me above everyone's heads. He was motioning for me to follow them.

I went along with the group and as they filed into their dressing rooms, I got a very warm welcome from the band. Angus was excited because he had brought along his new wife Ellen, and he wanted me to meet her. Ellen was a very pretty blonde model from Holland, who seemed very nice. Right away we struck up a conversation about Angus and the tour, and she was very happy to be with him. We talked about Angus and how different he is compared to his stage persona. Personally, he is so quiet and soft spoken that you would never guess he can get up on stage and command the attention of thousands of

people. I really laughed when Ellen said she didn't like the striptease part of the show, and wished Angus would stop mooning the audience! I think about this time he started wearing underwear and eased up a bit on showing bare flesh. Since then I have seen him flash underwear and skin while in concert, probably depending on his mood at the time.

Angus had a slight cold that night, and we laughed again when one time Ellen grabbed him and shoved him out of a draft because he was sick. I smiled to myself when I remembered Angus saying he wanted a blonde wife who would come on the road and take care of him. I was glad to see that he had found her. It was great meeting Ellen, and she was extremely friendly to me. I respected that, since many wives and girlfriends don't appreciate the women that their men know from the road.

It was so exciting to see them again and sad at the same time. They were headlining at the Coliseum, but of course without Bon. The place was packed that night and I found a good spot to stand behind the band on stage right. I hadn't heard any songs off their new album, so I didn't know what to expect. As the lights went down and the crowd started to scream, all of a sudden a huge church bell chiming the death knell slowly started to come down from the ceiling towards the stage. It was an eerie beginning to the first song I would hear them play without Bon singing. The song still gives me the chills when it starts and I always remember that night. As the lights came up and Brian Johnson walked out to the middle of the stage, the band broke into "Hells Bells" and the audience went completely crazy. As I stood there watching Brian step into

Bon's shoes, the hair on my arms stood up and my eyes filled with tears. I stood there realizing that I had watched AC/DC go from an unknown band here in America, to taking the world by storm in just three short years. I knew that night in 1977 when I stood in the Stone Hearth seeing them for the first time, that they would change the face of rock. I don't think there has been a band formed in the last twenty years that hasn't somehow been influenced by AC/DC.

As they launched into more of their incredible songs from Back In Black, I could feel Bon standing right there next to me watching the band, and I knew for certain at that moment that AC/DC would go on to become one of the greatest rock and roll bands in the world. And that's exactly what they did.

-EPILOGUE-

I received a Christmas card from Barry at the end of 1981, but we eventually lost touch with each other. After seeing AC/DC at Madison Square Garden in 1983, I didn't see them again in person until their Razors Edge tour in 1990. By then I was working for another music paper here in Madison, and of course was given the assignment of reviewing their show at the Coliseum. I also arranged a backstage pass so I could say hello.

They parted ways with drummer Phil Rudd in the mid-eighties, and had added Simon Wright. When they went on tour for Razors Edge, they hired drummer Chris Slade from The Firm. The new album spawned some great new AC/DC classics like "Thunderstruck" and "Money Talks," and helped put the band back on top of the heavy metal heap.

Their show was sold-out and they had a great new stage set with everything from red neon lighting running along the edge of the staging to a huge inflatable doll for "Whole Lotta Rosie." During "Money Talks" they had AC/DC funny money with Angus's face on them rain down on the audience. This was coming from the same guy who got mad at me for suggesting personalized guitar picks!

When we got into the dressing room, there were at least thirty people who were promised a chance to meet the band. This did not include all the other people who were left waiting in a hospitality area. There was also a guy who had won a chance to meet Angus and receive one of his hats through a local radio station. AC/DC had most definitely ascended into rock icon status by the early nineties.

When Angus came into the room with his tour manager, everyone went silent. Then a deejay presented Angus the radio contest winner and Angus presented him with a hat. They shook hands and Angus spent most of the time looking slightly embarrassed. Then he was led all the way around the room meeting everyone from radio personnel to limo drivers with good connections! When he finally got to me, I threw my arms around him and gave him a big hug. Everyone's jaws dropped to the floor! Angus smiled and squeezed me back and said, "Sue!" We hadn't seen each other in about seven years and within seconds we were talking about everything and trying to catch up on everyone.

I brought copies with me of the two color pictures we had taken together at Alpine Valley back in '78. Angus looked at them and quipped, "Oh, that was just last week, wasn't it?" We laughed and he got a tear in his eye as he was looking at them and then said to me, "Bon looked really great then, didn't he?" We had the nicest visit, albeit everyone in the room listening to us. He assured me he was still married to Ellen and they were doing fine. Then he asked me if I had heard that Barry became a minister! Wow! Now that I wasn't expecting. Angus told me that not only did Barry become a minister, but he wrote an unflattering book about the band! He didn't seem too happy about it. I brought along the original print of our picture together, and had them autograph it. I also had a nice conversation with Malcolm and got some great quotes for my article.

I was lucky enough to cover them again at Alpine Valley the following summer. It was in the nineties that day, and I can't believe they came out in that heat and put on a scorching (pardon the pun) two hour concert while everyone else was fainting from heat exhaustion. The only difference was the band took short breaks in between songs so they could wipe the sweat off of their guitars. We waited around after the show to see them, but they never came out of their dressing room.

When I grabbed a roadie and told him to tell the road manager to let Angus know that I was there, a few minutes later the roadie came back calling my name, and we were immediately ushered into the dressing room. The band was sitting there alone, recuperating from the intense heat. As usual they were all sitting around in their jeans and t-shirts sipping tea and smoking cigarettes. As soon as they saw me, Malcolm said, "Hey we saw Barry right after we saw you last winter!" That got us started into dishing about Barry's book and talking all about the good old days.

John and I got the chance to visit with Brian and quickly found out how nice and engaging he can be. He enjoys a beer or two, and after all these years in the band, still acts like he thinks he's the luckiest guy in the world. John was wearing a t-shirt from our favorite vacation place and Brian flipped out because he owns a house near there.

After seeing the guys again, I was inspired to write Barry a letter. I mailed it to the last address I had for him in L.A., and it came back to me unopened. I let the letter sit for a couple of weeks while I tried to think of a way to find him

when one day feeling frustrated, I tore the letter up and threw it away. The very same night that I tore up my letter to Barry, I was watching T.V. and channel surfing as usual. As I was sailing past the stations, an announcer on the 700 Club, a Christian channel, caught my attention when I heard her say the words AC/DC. There she was talking to Barry Taylor, "a former roadie for the mega-group AC/DC," and how he left the band and turned his sordid life around by becoming a minister!

Suddenly I thought I was in the Twilight Zone and my television transmission was being manipulated by outer forces! I jumped up and threw in a video tape and nervously programmed the channel into my VCR so I could record as much of the show as possible. John was at band rehearsal, and I knew he wouldn't believe me if I didn't have proof!

Barry went on to describe his life on the road with too many drugs, wanton sex and flowing alcohol. Barry had become a minister and along with his wife Cathy, pastored a church in a small town in California. I knew he told me he was a Christian and all, but this was quite a surprise to me! On top of it, he wrote a book about his life with AC/DC called Roadie To God, (later called Singing In The Dark), which was published only in England. I have never read it, but have heard it had less than glowing recollections of his adventures with AC/DC. The next morning I called the 700 Club's 1-800 number and left a message for Barry to call me. They said they would contact him for me, and about a week later Barry called. We hadn't spoken to each other in over ten years.

We talked a lot about his new vocation, and tried to catch each other up on everything that we had been doing for the last decade. Believe me, it was very weird to be talking to Barry knowing that he was now a minister of the Church.

He seemed very happy with his life and we promised each other not to lose touch again. The last news I heard about him was that he was getting a divorce and had returned to the L.A. area. Malcolm told me that Barry had come out to see them on their latest tour and he laughed when he said Barry was back to swearing again! I still haven't gotten my hands on a copy of his book, but the band wasn't too thrilled about it. However, they obviously didn't hold a grudge against him because they continue to see Barry whenever they are out on tour.

In fact, I also got the chance to see Phil Rudd's return and congratulate him on being back in the band. Apparently when he saw them on the Razors Edge tour, he had asked Angus if they were going to give him another "go at it." When they went to work on the Ballbreaker album, they graciously brought Phil back. Since he was one of their original drummers, I think it speaks volumes for the band that they gave Phil another chance. To have him back on the drums is a wonderful treat for any hard-core AC/DC fan. Phil is an intense, no-frills, soulful drummer, and he is truly the keeper of that infamous AC/DC backbeat.

Unfortunately, it was five more years before I saw the band again during their Ballbreaker tour. This time I was covering the concert for my own paper, Rock Central. When Angus and I saw each other again, I got another big smile and a "Hey, Sue," just like we had seen each other a few weeks before. This time there were dozens of people waiting to meet the band and he was autographing

two Gibson SGs that the record company was giving away in a contest. As Angus was signing his name, he looked at my husband John and said, "These are nicer than the ones they give me to play!" After that we found Malcolm in another room playing golf on his laptop computer, and we ended up having quite a few laughs.

That's what I would have to say is the most remarkable thing about our relationship over the years. They have always treated me as a friend from the night I met them in August of 1977, to the night I saw them in Milwaukee in August of 2000. They could have easily forgotten me long ago, but that has never been the case - for which I will always be grateful! Maybe it's because they know I was there from the beginning.

What they don't know is how comforting they were during some of the toughest times of my life. Especially Barry's letters and their fantastic music. They have never failed to lift my spirits and brighten my days.

During the Ballbreaker tour, I printed an article that I had written about the night I met them in 1977, and ran a picture of Bon and the band at the Stone Hearth. I sent some copies of the article to their publicity company and was stunned when they called me back asking for more pictures of Bon Scott.

Apparently Marvel Comics was producing an AC/DC comic book and was having a hard time finding old pictures of Bon. I contacted the photographer that took pictures of them that night at the Stone Hearth. He generously supplied me with some prints that I immediately sent off to Marvel Comics only to have the company downsize and ultimately not release the book!

I did have an opportunity to talk to the gentleman who was working with the band on it, and he told me what the story for the book was about: Bon is in hell and playing cards with Satan and Nixon, and he wins the right to bring the band down for a concert so he can meet Brian Johnson and perform with them again. When I commented on the fact that I didn't like the idea of Bon being in hell (even if it was just in a comic book) he assured me that Bon was in hell...but he was running the place! Now that I could at least smile at.

In fact, that night in Milwaukee I also ran into that dedicated fan I had mentioned earlier, Carl Allen, who follows the band around on tour. As we were back-stage saying our good-byes, Carl tried to stop Malcolm and quickly ask him, "Whatever happened to the Marvel Comic book that was supposed to be coming out?" Their tour manager was trying to get them to leave, and as they were walking out, Malcolm stopped, looked over at Carl, pointed to me and said: "Ask Sue, she knows everything, she goes all the way back." We laughed and waved at each other, and it occurred to me that my life really was a rock 'n' roll fantasy.

To be continued...

Photo by Keith Wessel

As the years go by I can still listen to AC/DC, and when I turn up the volume and close my eyes, I'm suddenly on the side of the stage: Bon and Angus are wailing, the band's roaring, the place is jumpin', I'm dancing and we're all twenty one again. That's the magic of AC/DC, and the eternal inspiration of rock and roll.

Photos by Erin Proctor

Angus and Brian
United Center,
Chicago, IL
March, 1996

Angus and I haven't aged a day!
Bradley Center, Milwaukee, WI
August, 2000

Susan and John with Brian Johnson and Malcolm Young, Stiff Upper Lip Tour

About The Author

During the eighties, Susan worked in New York City at SoundWorks Recording Studios with regular clients John Denver, Joe Cocker and Diana Ross. She also worked at Richard Gersh Associates, a publicity firm.

From 1991-96 she published Rock Central, a monthly rock magazine distributed throughout southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois.

In October of 1997, she helped launch the JJO Local Stage, a weekly local radio hour which she hosts every Sunday evening at 9 pm CT on 94.1 JJO. She also writes a monthly column, the WI Music News at www.wjjo.com.

Her new book, Famous Wisconsin Musicians is now available at www.badgerbooks.com. Susan lives in Madison, Wisconsin with her husband of twenty two years, John, and their nine year old son, Jamey. Her twenty-six year old daughter Teal, is in graduate school studying clinical psychology.

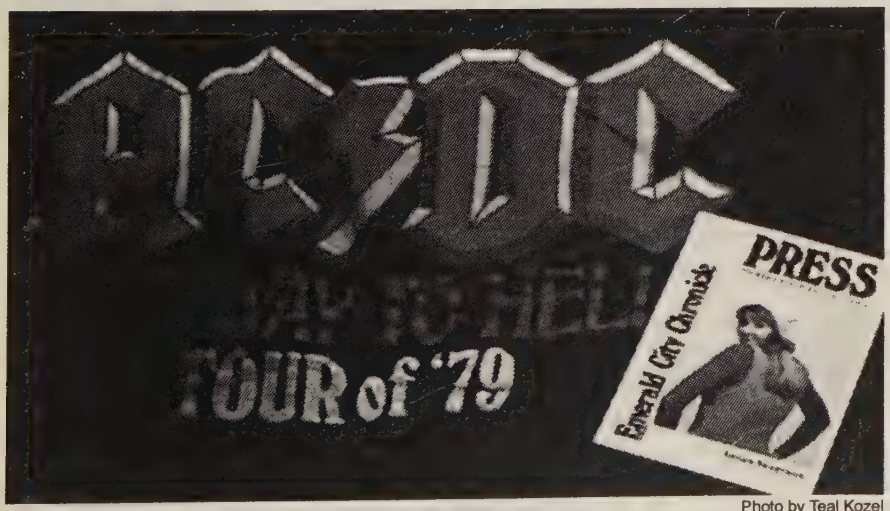


Photo by Teal Kozel

Thanks, love and gratitude to:

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Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy

BY Susan Masino

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"Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy" is a center stage front row seat to the late seventies rock explosion seen through the eyes of rock journalist/radio host, Susan Masino.

As associate editor of the Wisconsin music newspaper, The Emerald City Chronicle, Susan interviewed, worked and partied with dozens of bands including Kiss, Van Halen, Cheap Trick, Keith Emerson of Emerson, Lake and Palmer, Leslie West and Ted Nugent.

Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy" also follows AC/DC's rise to international fame from their first American tour in 1977 to the release of their 1980 tribute album to Bon Scott, Back In Black.

Susan Masino is a veteran music journalist and author of the book Famous Wisconsin Musicians. She works as a disk jockey at Ma radio station 94.1 WJJO.

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